Encounter

August 1978 80p

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Ancients, Classics, & Pure Nudity

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Max Black
Scientific Neutrality

Golo Mann
An Historian's Dilemma

Edited by Melvin J. Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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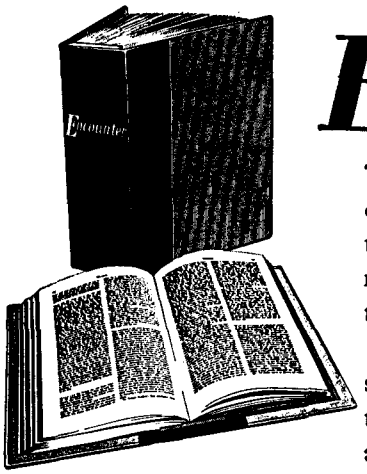

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AUGUST 1978
VOL. LI NO. 2

Encounter

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PUBLISHING ADVISERS: *Lord Ardwick, Blouke Carus, Lord Cudlipp, Cecil Harmsworth King, Leon Levy, Jack Watmough*
Per copy: UK 80p: USA & Canada $2.00. Back numbers £1.00 ($2.50). Postage extra: 15p (25c)
Annual Subscriptions: UK & Europe £8.75: USA & Canada $21.00 surface, $26.00 by air: Elsewhere £10.00.
Binder for six copies: £2.00 ($4.00).
Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).
US news-stand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc., P.O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post office Department, Ottowa, and for payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. *©1978 by Encounter Ltd.*
Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp or International Reply Coupons).

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BERNARD LEVIN writes:

"*Encounter*, which is almost exactly the same age as *The Mousetrap*, never produces an edition without something in it that is well worth reading and not to be found elsewhere; you will be surprised, if you try to think of other magazines which pass both halves of that test every time, at how short the list is. And one of the most agreeable functions of *Encounter* is to act as a forum in which, when a case has been forcefully stated on one side of a question central to our times, other and contrary views are expressed . . . it takes seriously its role as a forum in which the important issues of peace and war, freedom and its opponents, can be discussed calmly, rationally and courteously."

The Times

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Vilas Sarang

Musk Deer

WAKING UP one morning he felt a kind of wetness in his navel. He lifted the tail of his shirt and peered down. Indeed his navel was filled with a liquid, topped by a thin film. He dipped a finger in the liquid and held it close to his eyes. Then he sniffed at it. It had the peculiar smell that the dirt in the navel possesses. Disgusting if you like, but also exhilarating in a way. He sniffed again.

He didn't of course know what had happened. But he was amused rather than intrigued. "Good God, am I turning into a musk deer or something?" he asked himself.[1]

He wiped the liquid with the tail of his shirt. Later, he forgot about the whole matter. He had to finish a book review by evening, and that kept him preoccupied.

Getting into bed at night, he had another look at his navel; liquid had welled up again. Now he seemed annoyed. "Musk Deer, Musk Deer", he muttered as he wiped the liquid.

Next morning the level of liquid in the navel had risen. There was a crust on the edges. The liquid was yellower than the day before. He also noted that his navel hurt slightly. "This is too much. Better go and see a doctor", he decided.

The doctor cast a glance at his navel and announced, "Well, that's an umbilical abscess."

"Umbilical abscess", Musk Deer said to himself. "What's that?" he asked the doctor.

"It's like this", the doctor said. "When you are born, they cut the umbilical cord. The wound heals after some time. But in some rare cases the wound does not quite heal. Later at some time it may get infected. Pus begins to come out."

"But doctor, I'm twenty-six years old", Musk Deer said incredulously. "How could the wound remain unhealed for such a long period? That's hard to believe."

"Yes, it's hard to believe", the doctor said. "But such things do happen."

It seemed to Musk Deer as if he were seeing all his twenty-six years in a new light. Hell, he thought, I finished school, graduated from college, began to work for a living, and all these years my umbilical cord has never been severed.

He remembered Karwar, the place where he was born. His father had left Karwar soon after his birth and he had never gone back there himself. So he carried no memory of his birthplace. Not even a blurred picture of a house, or a street, a scene with trees or water, nothing. His birthplace was just a name.

"So what do we do now?" he asked the doctor.

"I'll give you antibiotics", the doctor said. "Then we'll see. Perhaps the abscess will dry out. But if it grows and threatens to burst, it's better to get into a hospital."

"How many days will this take?"

"Can't say. Maybe two or three weeks. Maybe more. But you do this—take as much rest as you can. Don't move around much."

He left the doctor's room with a packet of sulphonamides.

After lunch that day he went to see Waghmare. Waghmare lived on the top floor of the building. He owned the building, and had kept the entire top floor for his own

[1] The popular belief in India is that musk is produced in a musk deer's navel, and that the deer wanders around searching for the origin of the maddening scent, not knowing that the scent rises from its own navel.

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use. He had given Musk Deer a small room on the ground floor of the building. In lieu of rent, Musk Deer performed the duty of collecting Waghmare's share of the money earned by his beggars. Waghmare had twenty-seven beggars.

NOT MANY of Bombay's citizens know that the countless beggars in Bombay are under the thumb of a few bosses. The bosses keep beggars in their power by threat and force, and by protecting them from the police. In return each beggar gives a cut of his earnings to the boss. With two or three dozen beggars under his wing, a boss can make good money. At one time, one or two newspapers had planned to expose this racket, but the bosses had foiled the attempt.

Waghmare's servant opened the door and Musk Deer went in. Waghmare's face was hidden behind a newspaper but, sensing the arrival of a visitor, he closed the newspaper and threw it on the table. He took off his spectacles and placed them upon the newspaper. He looked up. "Ah well, it's you", he said.

Musk Deer noted that Waghmare had kept his spectacles right side up. One shouldn't keep spectacles in this way if they are open, for it causes the frame to loosen. It's always a good idea to keep spectacles upside down. It bothered Musk Deer every time he saw Waghmare put down his spectacles the wrong way. But he could never get up enough courage to suggest to Waghmare that he keep his spectacles correctly.

Musk Deer told Waghmare about the umbilical abscess. "Well", he said, trying to sound jovial, "I've become a kind of a musk deer."

Waghmare showed much interest in Musk Deer's malady. "The kind of illnesses a man may have!" he marvelled. "So you are a musk deer now, eh? That's a delightful idea. You read a lot of books, I know. That's how you get such imaginative ideas."

As he talked, Waghmare kept pushing a finger up one of his nostrils. There didn't seem to be any dirt inside. It was simply a habit. Over the years this habit had made Waghmare's large nostrils even wider.

"Good", said Waghmare. "From now on, I'll call you Musk Deer. It sounds nice. But tell me, Musk Deer, where's your doe?" He laughed expansively. "Now you'll have hordes of does following your scent, Musk Deer!"

Waghmare was now scraping hard at the inside of his nostrils, which were beginning to look red. Then Waghmare wiped his finger on his loincloth and, with the same finger, began to feel the hair inside his nose. The moment he found a somewhat long hair he held it between two fingers, shut his eyes, and gave a pull. Opening his eyes he was observing the hair, when he had a sudden fit of sneezing. The hair slipped from his hand. Wiping his nose he bent down and began to look for the hair on the carpet. He couldn't see it. So he got out of the chair and, kneeling upon the carpet, searched for the hair. Musk Deer stared at the soles of his feet pressing against his buttocks. The soles of Waghmare's feet were pink and delicate.

At last Waghmare found the hair. He carefully dropped it into the dust-bin.

"What else, then, Musk Deer?" Waghmare asked.

"It's like this", Musk Deer said. "If this abscess gets worse, I shan't be able to move around much. The doctor has told me not to, anyway. So I doubt if I can make my visits to the beggars for some time."

Thoughtfully, Waghmare stroked his thigh for a minute or two. Then he said, "All right, I'll send someone else on the round till you get well. But if we aren't able to locate a shirker, you'll have to go and find him. Okay?"

RETURNING TO his room Musk Deer thought over things. Since he wouldn't be able to do his job for Waghmare, he decided to devote more time to his other job. The work he did for Waghmare had solved the problem of accommodation, but he still needed other work for a living. Fortunately, this happened to be a sedentary job. The Literary and Cultural Academy had launched the gigantic project of making a *Literary Encyclopedia*, and Musk Deer did assignments for it. He had some reputation for his knowledge of Western literature, and he wrote articles in this field for the *Encyclopedia*. Besides this, he wrote book reviews for the Sunday edition of *People's Power*. On the

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whole, he was doing pretty well.

Musk Deer began to work on an article upon Georgian poetry for the *Encyclopedia*. He swallowed sulphonamides at proper intervals. The abscess remained a mild irritation; some pus came out.

Three days later there was a message from Waghmare: the cripple at the Bombay Central Station had vanished; also, Bansi Lal of Breach Candy was missing. Could Musk Deer go looking for them?

It was not particularly painful to walk, not yet anyway. So Musk Deer said yes.

Next morning he headed towards Bombay Central. The cripple—who was known simply as the cripple—used to sleep in a shelter beside the State Transport bus station. He used to beg in the lanes around the bus station.

First Musk Deer checked the cripple's shelter. Then he began to go over the streets around the shelter one by one. Here and there he asked petty shopkeepers if they had seen the cripple lately.

When a beggar is missing, three possibilities arise: he may be working for another boss, or he may be begging on his own, or he may have left Bombay. Hardly anything could be done in the third type of case, but it seldom arose. From all over India, from obscure villages in distant regions, people came to beg in Bombay. Why should they leave of their own accord? With the other types of cases, one could usually trace a beggar by getting in touch with the men of the other beggar bosses.

And then, this was the case of a cripple. How far could a cripple go on his own? A beggar woman called Bhagi used to live in a shelter near a street-corner. The cripple sometimes visited her late in the night. Musk Deer questioned her, and learned that she hadn't seen the cripple for four or five days.

Searching wider and wider, Musk Deer found himself near the Mahalaxmi area. It was past three in the afternoon. Musk Deer was fatigued. Earlier in the day he had spent half an hour in an Irani restaurant over a cup of tea. That was all the rest he had had. But now a *paanwalla*[2] told him that he had seen a cripple who crawled on his back go past his shop a few hours ago. Musk Deer's face brightened. And indeed, turning a corner, he saw in the distance a figure stretched on the pavement. The figure appeared to be moving in Musk Deer's direction.

Musk Deer walked a little further and waited near a shop. On the opposite pavement the cripple moved forward. The cripple had lost both his legs up to the buttocks. He moved on his back. His method was to move his head and shoulders in the desired direction, and then to drag his backside. He placed his small aluminium begging-bowl on the side on which he progressed. Before moving his head and shoulders, he pushed the bowl ahead. Then he dragged himself up to the bowl. Then he pushed the bowl further. The aluminium bowl rattled on the pavement. Passers-by dropped coins. The cripple was also mute, but he made a kind of nasal sound. Making what noise he could, he stretched his arms towards people passing in the street. When someone walked behind his head, his eyes rolled upward. When someone passed below his body, his eyes rolled downward. His stretched figure took up most of the pavement, and people had to find a way above or below it.

IN A SHORT WHILE the cripple had moved to the point where Musk Deer stood. He was, of course, on the opposite pavement, and therefore did not see Musk Deer. Being close to the ground, his field of vision was naturally limited. He kept moving on.

Musk Deer decided not to go up to the cripple, but instead to keep a watch on him from a distance. He wanted to see where he went at evening. Then he would know if the cripple had joined some other people.

Musk Deer shadowed the cripple. The cripple's pace was slow, and Musk Deer had to make frequent pauses. When the cripple was at the beginning of a street, Musk Deer walked to the end of the street and waited for the cripple to catch up. The cripple crawled to the end of the street over the other pavement, then turned right or left, or went straight on. Then Musk Deer walked up that street, and waited again for the cripple. Musk Deer noted that at every corner the cripple raised his neck and looked about at the shops and buildings.

[2] Petty shopkeeper who sells *paan* (betel leaf), cigarettes, etc.

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At sunset the cripple paused in front of a shop that sold roasted peanuts. He picked up two or three coins from his bowl, held them before the shopkeeper, and made a noise. The man bent down to take the money, and handed the cripple a packet of peanuts. The cripple moved on and, lying beside a wall, ate the nuts. Then he moved again, found some vacant space in a lane, and lay up.

By now Musk Deer was convinced that the cripple had not absconded deliberately. He had merely strayed beyond familiar streets and lanes, and was not able to find his way back. Musk Deer crossed the street and went to the cripple. The cripple saw him, threw up his arms and began to make urgent noises, like a child that had seen its father.

"Hey Cripple, you got lost, did you?" Musk Deer said.

The cripple made a louder noise.

"Okay, okay. We'll carry you back tomorrow morning. Do you want a little tea or something?"

The cripple nodded, and made more noise.

Musk Deer went to the nearest restaurant and fetched some tea in a tall glass. The cripple drank, and Musk Deer turned home. He had accomplished one of his two tasks.

Musk Deer was dog-weary when he got home. He ate, and stretched on his bed. Perhaps because of the irritation in his navel, he could not sleep. He lay in bed, eyes shut. During the day he had watched the cripple for so many hours that an after-image remained before his eyes: head and shoulders jerking, then the backside, head and shoulders jerking again, moving endlessly. The cripple's eyes are forever turned upward, Musk Deer thought, so he must know much about God in heaven. But then, the creature happens to be dumb. So what use asking him about God? Maybe it is the perpetual sight of God that struck him dumb.

Late in the night Musk Deer fell asleep. But he kept having unpleasant dreams. Once he saw the cripple at the end of a street. Suddenly the street went up like a see-saw board, and the cripple rolled to the other end of the street. Then the other side went up, and the cripple rolled back again. Thus it went on. This behaviour of the street gave Musk Deer a terrible fright and he woke up in a sweat. Wiping his half-naked body, he went back to sleep a little later. The cripple appeared again. This time, as the cripple moved up the street, the other end of the street rose slowly. The cripple progressed, but found it more and more difficult to hold on. He was frantic. By the time he was nearing the other end of the street, that end had risen so high that eventually he rolled down again. His aluminium bowl came clattering down after him, and the coins scattered around. The cripple lay still at the lower end for some time. Slowly the street righted itself. Seeing this, the cripple collected his bowl and what coins he could gather, and started moving again. Once more the street rose slowly, and the cripple hurtled down. Musk Deer woke in the midst of his rolling. Giving up hope of getting any sleep, Musk Deer switched the light on and began to read a book of Georgian verse.

THE NEXT DAY Musk Deer informed Waghmare's men of the whereabouts of the cripple. Then he went in search of Bansi Lal. Bansi Lal, a leper, lived in a shack near Breach Candy. Usually he begged at a corner of the Bhulabhai Desai Road. Musk Deer checked there first. Bansi Lal was not at the corner. Then Musk Deer went to his shack. He peered in, and saw Bansi Lal lying on a tattered mat.

"Well, Bansi Lal, you're right here", Musk Deer said. "And they told me you had vanished."

"Yes, sahib, I'm here. Why should I run away?" Bansi Lal lifted his head. A fly sitting on his atrophied nose rose in the air. Leprosy has made his nose insensitive, so he doesn't feel the fly's presence, Musk Deer thought. But, he wondered, when most of the nose has disappeared, doesn't the remaining part have any sensitivity?

"Then where were you", Musk Deer asked, "when our men came to see you four days ago?"

"The story is this, sahib. The other day my crow brought me a piece of meat and I ate it. Then in the evening I had great pain in the stomach. At that time I was at Haji Ali. I began to vomit, and became quite ill. So I slept there in a friend's shack. I couldn't get up for two or three days. Only yesterday did I get back. I'm still not well, though. I'm too weak to go out."

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Musk Deer knew about Bansi Lal's crow. Instead of cremating or burying their dead, the Parsis throw them to the birds. The Towers of Silence—the wells into which they place their dead—were on the hill above Bansi Lal's shack. So there were always multitudes of kites, vultures, and crows hovering in the area. Once a crow had flown down and perched on a tree near Bansi Lal's shack. He carried a large piece of flesh in his beak. The crow tried to tear at the piece with its claws, and the piece fell to the ground. Before the crow could descend, Bansi Lal pounced upon the meat and, holding it between his atrophied fingers, went in. It was nice, red meat. Outside, the crow raised a din. Bansi Lal cut up the meat and put it on the stove. Annoyed at the crow's squawking, he went outside and threw a few stones. The crow dodged the stones, and continued to hover around. The meat was cooked. Bansi Lal thought for a moment, and threw two or three small pieces of meat outside. The crow swooped down, devoured the meat, and flew off.

Next morning Bansi Lal heard cawing outside his door. He ignored it. The cawing continued. Bansi Lal peered outside and saw a crow perched on a tree. The crow held a chunk of meat in its claws. Seeing Bansi Lal the crow dropped the meat to the ground. Bansi Lal was amazed. For a minute, he just stared at the piece of meat. The crow looked at him and kept cawing. Then Bansi Lal walked out and picked up the meat. After cooking it, he threw some pieces to the crow.

This began to happen every day. The crow had developed a taste for cooked meat. Later the crow became somewhat tamed. It used to come to the door of the shack, and jump around and make friendly noises, though it never let itself be touched. Bansi Lal was happy. He was getting a good meal every day without much effort. It was fine as long as the Parsis were dying.

But this time something had gone wrong. "Must've been some rotting bastard of a Parsi", Bansi Lal said. "Messed up my stomach."

"Well, are you okay now?" Musk Deer asked.

"I'm getting better, sahib", Bansi Lal said. "I'm weak, as I said. But I'll be able to go out in two or three days."

Musk Deer asked if he needed something.

"It will be nice if you could fetch me some bread", Bansi Lal said.

Returning with a loaf of bread, Musk Deer saw a crow on the tree in front of the shack. It was cawing.

"Yesterday too it came", Bansi Lal said. "It had brought meat. Went on cawing for a long time. It must have wondered why I didn't come out. But I could hardly rise. Finally it went away."

Musk Deer looked at the crow on the tree. There wasn't any meat in its claws.

"Throw a few pieces of bread to it, sahib", Bansi Lal said.

The crow swooped upon the bread. "Eat, my dear, eat", Bansi Lal said, raising his head to look at the crow.

When it had finished the bread, the crow flew up to the tree. It kept cawing for some time. Then it went away.

It was noon when Musk Deer left Bansi Lal's shack and came to the bus stand. He was hungry, and hoped to get home soon for lunch. But no bus turned up for a long time. In the distance, above the Towers of Silence on Malabar Hill, birds circled. Beside Musk Deer, two women and a man waited for the bus. None of them looked like a Parsi.

MUSK DEER HAD carried out both the tasks assigned to him. For a whole week there was no further request from Waghmare. Musk Deer managed to do a good deal of reading and writing. The irritation in his navel did not diminish. The sulphonamides did not seem to have much effect. Now he was not able to walk erect. He had to stoop a little, and walk gently.

After completing the article on Georgian poetry Musk Deer began working on a review for *People's Power*. Then a message came from Waghmare saying that Narayan of the Mahalaxmi racecourse was missing.

Musk Deer's first thought was to say no. He could not now do much walking. But then he thought of Narayan. Narayan was a newcomer. Musk Deer had visited him only two or three times for collection. Narayan had begged since he was a small child. Then, when he was seventeen or eighteen, a holy man called Jayaram Baba had taken him under his wing. In Jayaram Baba's company Narayan

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travelled widely in North India. They visited many holy places. At night Jayaram Baba made love to him. After a few years Narayan was tired of slaving for Jayaram Baba. One day he ran away, and came to Bombay.

Narayan's only capital as a beggar was that his right arm was amputated. But he had a flair for begging, and earned well. There were two or three bus stops at which he usually begged.

The first time he saw Narayan, Musk Deer was struck by his own resemblance to him. Even their physical build, he thought, was alike. That first time, he gazed at Narayan as if he wanted to pierce his soul. An idea was taking shape in his head. Many years ago when his parents lived in Karwar, and some time before his own birth, his elder brother had vanished. Musk Deer had learned about this from his parents. His elder brother was five years old when this happened. One day his mother took him to a temple, and he got lost in the crowd. He was never found again. His parents thought that he was carried off by some band of dacoits or beggars. Often in his childhood Musk Deer's mother used to hug him, and talk to him of his missing brother. "He looked so much like you", she used to say, and wipe her eyes.

The idea that now came into Musk Deer's mind was this: could Narayan be his missing brother? It was an electrifying idea. It made Musk Deer look at Narayan with quite different eyes. He observed Narayan's every little movement closely, as if he expected to find some clue about his identity.

Although Musk Deer had gathered some information about Narayan's earlier years, he had never asked Narayan about his childhood. Nor had he spoken to Narayan about the hunch in his mind. He thought he would open the subject when he had come to know Narayan better. And now Narayan had vanished.

Musk Deer thought. If it were only a question of obliging Waghmare he would have said no. But here his own feelings were involved. After much deliberation, Musk Deer decided to go in search of Narayan. The abscess would make it painful, but he couldn't help it.

Musk Deer checked the places where Narayan begged, and where he slept. There was no trace of him. Musk Deer didn't know where to look for him. Since Narayan was a newcomer, Musk Deer knew next to nothing about his friends, or about the places he frequented. All he could do was to wander around Bombay. He recalled that Narayan had once remarked to him that he liked to sit in some garden at evening. So Musk Deer decided to visit the gardens in Bombay in the evenings.

He wandered for hours each day. Because of the abscess he had to walk with a stoop, like an old man. People in the street were often intrigued to see a young man walking in this manner. Boys jibed at him. To prevent the pus from running down Musk Deer taped some cottonwool over his navel. It was summer. The ball of cottonwool got soaked with pus from the inside, and with sweat from outside.

In three days Musk Deer walked countless streets of Bombay. He searched in all kinds of places. He did not see Narayan.

At a railway station Musk Deer saw a man in a dark suit, wearing dark glasses. On Bose Road he saw a taxicab with its hood opened like a jaw, and the cabman peering into it. He saw an old man at a crossing waiting for the lights to turn green, who looked as if he had been waiting for ever. He saw a man sitting on top of an empty hand-cart. He saw a man leaning against a lamp-post, reading a newspaper. He saw a small boy pressing his nose against the glass of a show-window. He saw a man trying to light a cigarette, his back against the wind. He saw the film actor Dilip Kumar pass by in a Cadillac. He saw a woman on the second floor of a building shut the window. He saw a man on a ladder painting a huge film poster, and the man's raised arm holding a brush. He saw on the poster the head of a woman with only one eye painted. He saw a dog sniffing the dirt on a garbage heap, and another dog sniffing the dog's behind. He saw a man in a red shirt come out of a restaurant. He saw three men sitting upon the parapet by the sea, looking out at the lifeless water. Downtown at dawn, passing by the rows of beggars and vagrants sleeping in front of business buildings, he saw a boy masturbating. He saw the wrapper of a loaf of Britannia Bread on a pavement. He saw the unhooked strap of a woman's bra inside her bodice. He saw a postman enter a building on Lady Jamshedji Road. He saw

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men hanging in the doorways of a suburban train. But he did not see Narayan.

THREE DAYS of wandering left Musk Deer in a state of exhaustion. The pain became worse. On the fourth day he stayed in bed. He realised that his chances of finding Narayan were meagre. How can you track down a man in this vast city of Bombay? But then, what could he do except wander in whatever direction his feet took him?

Next day Musk Deer went out again. Two days later he had a stroke of luck. Wandering at evening in the Five Gardens at Matunga, Musk Deer saw a man on a bench with his back towards him. The figure looked so much like Narayan's. Back bent, Musk Deer ran, breathing hard.

"Narayan, Narayan", he panted.

Narayan sat on the bench, legs stretched and eyes shut. He opened his eyes. "Oh, sahib, how did you get here?" he said.

"But why did you run away, Narayan?"

Narayan smiled. "I got bored with begging at the same bus stands every day. It was nicer in a way when I was with Jarayam Baba. As holy men we begged with honour. People gave freely, and with respect. We went from town to town. Everywhere, we travelled free on the train." He scratched the end of his amputated arm. "I thought I'd leave Bombay, grow a beard, and become a holy man. Having been around with Jayaram Baba, I know the ropes; I know where to go, and when. Then I thought I'd move around a bit and see Bombay before I left. But sahib, it's incredible that you hunted me down!"

"Look here, Narayan. Don't leave Bombay, at least for a few days", Musk Deer said. Suddenly he noted that he was very tired, and that the abscess hurt more than ever. He sat beside Narayan. "I'm not asking this for Waghmare's sake, Narayan. It's for my own sake."

Then he told Narayan about his missing brother. He spoke about the idea in his mind. Narayan listened, a smile on his face. When he wasn't begging, Narayan always wore this faint smile on his face. It was as if he was amused at everything.

Musk Deer finished talking. Then Narayan said, "What's all this you've got on your mind, sahib? It doesn't make sense. There are so many people who look alike in some way or other. Why take it so seriously? It would be unbelievable if I turned out to be your brother from thousands of beggars in this country. I think you had better forget the idea."

With one hand over his abdomen, Musk Deer looked at Narayan. He didn't speak. It was Narayan who spoke again. "And look at it this way, sahib. Suppose I turn out to be your missing brother. What good is that? Your life has been so different from mine. You're educated. I've begged all my life. In Jayaram Baba's company I've had all kinds of experiences. So what's there to bring us together now? Why do you take all this trouble?" Stroking the growth on his chin Narayan looked towards the top of the tamarind tree in front. "Nowadays, sahib, even brothers who have grown up under one roof don't care for one another. And you're getting worked up about a brother you've never seen! These days one doesn't worry much over others. All one can do is live off someone. I live off the people, Waghmare lives off us, you live off him. What more should one bother about?"

"Narayan, we'll talk about that later", Musk Deer said. He lifted his hand from his navel and placed it upon Narayan's shoulder. "Tell me, when did you lose your arm? And how?"

"I don't know", Narayan said. "My arm has always been like this since I remember."

"It's curious you should lose your arm at such an early age. Probably the beggars who kidnapped you cut your arm off to qualify you for begging. Now, tell me where you lived as a child."

"Since I remember I begged at Nasik under the shelter of my uncle. Uncle used to say that my parents died soon after I was born. Then one day Uncle vanished, and later Jayaram Baba picked me up."

"Hm", Musk Deer said thoughtfully. "What's your earliest memory? Describe it as well as you can."

"My earliest memory?" Narayan pondered. "Yes, I see a dim scene. There is sea at one end, then palm trees, further on a house with a tin roof, a narrow lane . . . it meets a paved street near a fig tree . . . chickens feeding in the courtyard of the house." Eyes shut, he rested his head on the

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bench. "There's another blurred picture. A room. Not well lighted. A bed on the right hand. A mat spread near the bed. Two trunks in a corner, one above the other. Near them, a toy horse." Narayan fell silent. He didn't open his eyes, or raise his head.

Musk Deer's eyes shone. "Look, Narayan," he said. "There's no sea at Nasik. But there's sea at Karwar. Right?"

Narayan didn't speak. Musk Deer thought. It occurred to him that if he himself had some memory of Karwar, he might have been able to say if the house Narayan remembered was their own. "But damn it, I don't remember a thing", he said to himself.

Then he said, "I've got an idea, Narayan. See, the two of us will go to Karwar. We'll look around. We could find out if a house like the one you remember is still there. Or the lane, or the fig tree. Maybe you'll recognise something else. Then we'll know. Yes, we can find out."

Narayan opened his eyes. He looked at Musk Deer and smiled.

Musk Deer persuaded Narayan to go with him. "We'll take a bus tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow", he declared.

THE TWO GOT UP. As he rose, a sharp pain hit Musk Deer in the abdomen. His face twisted. When the pain subsided he began to walk, his hand on Narayan's shoulder. Yet with every step he had the sensation of a nail being driven into this navel. But they had to walk only to Dadar Tram Terminus. There they could get a bus. The abscess was causing more pain, and yet Musk Deer felt so light, so free. He had found Narayan.

Now it was dark. The two reached the main road. In the distance they could see the glitter of the shops at Dadar.

Musk Deer wondered if he could make it to Karwar in his present condition. He knew he would suffer. But there won't be much walking to do, he thought. What was the point in waiting till his illness was over? He couldn't tell when it would be over, anyway.

He mustn't speak to Waghmare about the planned journey with Narayan, he thought. And what happens after the trip? Musk Deer was convinced that Narayan was his missing brother. Would he let Narayan beg in the streets after their return? Oh no, he thought, I shall look after him, help him make it in life. No doubt Waghmare will be angry. He won't like it at all. In matters of business Waghmare was ruthless. Perhaps he will take away my job, Musk Deer thought. I shall have to leave the room.

The train of his thoughts was broken by a fresh bout of pain. He crouched, clutching at his abdomen. "Sahib, sahib—", Narayan called, bending towards him.

There was another sting of pain. Vaguely it occurred to Musk Deer that all this was due to his wanderings of the past week. He waited for the pain to subside. But it didn't.

He couldn't bear it any more. "A cab—stop a cab", he said to Narayan.

Narayan tried to hail a cab. But, seeing his appearance, cabmen sped away. They didn't want beggars or bootleggers in their cabs. Finally, a cab did stop. Musk Deer crawled towards it. Narayan opened the door, and Musk Deer got in.

"Don't you come in", the cabman said to Narayan.

Musk Deer looked at Narayan. Silently Narayan shut the door. "I'll visit you tomorrow, Narayan—", the taxi sped away before Musk Deer could say anything further.

"To J.J. Hospital", Musk Deer told the cabman.

Musk Deer groaned in the back seat. The cabman drove, without once looking back at him. Large and small lights flashed past on both sides of the street. A breeze blew in. Then suddenly Musk Deer shut his eyes tight. At that moment the abscess burst. He felt as if a thousand lotuses were opening up simultaneously in his navel.

For an instant a picture flashed before his eyes: the sea at one end, then palm trees, a house, chickens clucking in the courtyard, a lane. . . .

He opened his eyes, and looked at his abdomen. His shirt was soaked in blood. He passed out.

The taxi was entering the hospital gate when he came to. I won't be able to go to Karwar soon, he thought. But I shall go, he thought. I shall go as soon as I get well. Narayan will wait for me. He will not run away. I shall go to Karwar with Narayan, he thought. It's just a question of a few days. The taxi stopped.

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Golo Mann

The Old History & the New

Thoughts on the Crisis of Theory & Practice

FIRST, A TRUISM. There is only one truth, however manifold it may be, and only one scholarly discipline. Hence there can no more be a Marxist and a bourgeois history than there can be a Marxist and a bourgeois physics.

Along with other historians or historical theorists, Marx made a considerable contribution to the science of history. There were times in which this contribution could be freely assimilated and used by so-called bourgeois historians, in so far as they considered it valid; for example, it was utilised by Max Weber. The new dogmatisation, politicisation, and idolisation of Marx's contribution has made such easy assimilation more difficult. It is only when confronted by the dogma that one becomes a non-Marxist, which one really ought not to be: a free scholar and writer is neither a Marxist nor a non-Marxist; he does not recognise these alternatives. But under present circumstances one finds oneself on the defensive, involved in polemics. One might be tempted to call upon the founding father as a star witness for evidence against certain neo-Marxist positions. Marx himself thought in eminently historical terms; Marx himself refused to condemn any past social form, any organisation of the means of production, until it had fully unfolded all its potential; and so on. But what Marx thought is not so overwhelmingly important: he was merely one of many.

To come to the point, like economics and politics in recent years, like others of the so-called humanities (e.g., literature and the visual arts) for the last ten to twenty years, history is passing through a crisis, about which we can read all we want to. From younger historians comes the cry: "History, yes, but of a different kind, an entirely different kind from the past! . . ." From non-historians comes the cry: "Away with the trappings of history as a separate discipline, away with the teaching of history in schools! Redistribute those elements of historical science that are still useful among other areas of study and teaching, such as sociology, economics and jurisprudence. . . ."

In the following I shall not have in mind those who wish to do away with the study or teaching of history entirely, but only those who demand or believe they are practising an "entirely new kind of history." In the process I shall occasionally distinguish between, on the one hand, an "entirely new form of history", which cannot and should not exist, and on the other a relatively new form of history, which always has existed and must also exist today.

OF THE TWO MAIN CAUSES of the crisis in historical studies, one is national in scope, and parochial in nature; the other is world-wide.

Looking at my own traditions, I turn first to the particularly German causes. In the Hohenzollern Empire, in the Weimar Republic and during the twelve years that followed it, the German historians failed. If they were not themselves the lackeys of power—but often they were—they

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nevertheless glorified the national State, the State as such, asserted the primacy of foreign policy over domestic policy, cared little for economic problems and social issues and those who carried their burden, the broad mass of working people. This "National Liberal" school of history continued undismayed after 1945. Not until the 1960s was it possible, at least partially, to thrust it aside and make way for new methods of research, in response to new questions.

I would want to qualify these propositions in the following way. There were indeed such worshippers of the State, of power and success. I even know older people who in their youth turned vehemently against the weak-minded epigoni of Droysen and Treitschke; at the time this was more difficult than it is now. But however justified the demand for more social history (and correspondingly less merely political history), people often—not always, but often—overlook how much the old history also achieved in the area of social history, even in Germany. It will be sufficient here to mention the names of Lamprecht, Schmoller, and Otto Hintze.[1] In America the so-called "New History", the historiography of Charles A. Beard and his friends, is now fifty years old. We have long ago become familiar with those works in which the history of the nation is carried forward along various paths, which deal with living conditions and wages, excise taxes and currency rates, agriculture and industry, schools, laws, the press, literature, cooking, philosophy and so on (and then also with politics, but in this case with a scarcely veiled contempt). And even this New History was not so very new. We have only to look at the first volume of Taine's *Origins of Contemporary France*. How can one be so overwhelmed by figures, amassed with indescribable industry, and by what these figures represent, incomes, privileges, wages, the highest and the lowest, public and private debts and so on, and then say that the arch-conservative Taine did not concern himself sufficiently with the economy and society? No, the new history of our day is not so new after all.

THE OTHER CAUSE of the crisis in history is very far-reaching. The European State System has collapsed; hence its history too is no longer interesting. Just as Europe today is content with a wretched place in world politics, so our continent must be satisfied with a similar position in historical studies. The real crisis is universal, and we know its components. Over-industrialisation and destruction of the natural environment; population explosion; over-abundance going hand in hand with hunger; the insanity of the arms race between the super-powers in which the constant issue is quite literally who can destroy whom quickly enough not to be destroyed themselves. In this situation without parallel in human history, we hear it said that the historian, too, must assume the roles of a public man with social and civic responsibilities.

I would also want to qualify these propositions. He does not have to become the public man; he can if the spirit or his sense of duty impels him to. He can do so alongside his real work, as a citizen, as a member of committees devoted to such global questions of the day. He may also do so within his main vocation if he is studying contemporary history, the history of yesterday, in relation to the future, or if he is involved in one of those new research enterprises that are a mixture of traditional disciplines with a current purpose, for example peace research and conflict studies.

But the question as to the "only thing" the historian of today *should* or *must* do is wrongly posed. If we all had to fall in with its answer, we should already be living under an intellectual despotism. The interest in history is not single and simple, it is multiple, as the functions of memory are multiple. As an academic teacher the historian will do well to interest his students, otherwise he will lead a miserable life. As a writer he will do well to interest readers, otherwise he will soon see where he lands with his books and footnotes.

Beyond that he is free to study and present what he considers of importance to the present. That, as is frequently stressed, he is writing "in the present for the present" is inescapably correct; I have never met anyone who was writing "in the past for the past". But what does "for the present" mean? If the present no longer requires anything but ecological research, nutritional research, peace research and other such up-to-date enquiries, then we should really have to do away with history or pursue it no further into the past than, say, 1945. It is quite impossible to write ancient Roman history with reference to the pollution of the ocean or to interpret Aztec culture in terms of the nuclear arms race.

[1] See the edition of his essays published in 1975: Otto Hintze, *Historical Essays*, edited by Felix Gilbert and Robert M. Berdahl (Oxford University Press).

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ALONGSIDE THE DEMAND for direct application of historical research to the pressing needs of the moment stands another: all historical work must be "emancipatory", must serve the cause of emancipation. The two demands are not the same. The overcoming of present dangers and afflictions, if it can succeed at all, will call for much compulsion, hopefully—I say, hopefully—a compulsion exercised by democratically legitimate powers. What the modish word "emancipation" really means I do not know precisely, but I have a rough idea: I suppose it means liberation, or freedom from all untested, tradition, freedom from compulsion, self-determination, a society free from overlords, "humanity at long last standing erect", as the phrase goes. It then becomes the historian's task to trace through the conglomeration of five thousand or fifty thousand years of human history the red thread that leads to this goal which is now within our grasp.

This demand, too, is not entirely new, for Immanuel Kant formulated it with a clarity that cannot be surpassed today. Now, much as I love Kant—an eclectic loves many things—I still have my doubts, and they relate to both propositions: firstly to emancipation itself, and secondly to the historian's involvement in the matter.

No one denies that the modern European world has existed under the sign of emancipation for the last four hundred years: emancipation from tradition that stood in the way of progressive science and upheld worldly hierarchies, from superstitious beliefs, indeed from all beliefs—doubtless it would be possible to define the difference between beliefs that are superstitious and those that are not. Emancipation in the literal sense, of serfs and slaves, equality of rights for women, the dissolution of European colonial empires (with the notable exception of the Russian empire): all these things fall within the same wide compass. A few very beneficial innovations which our last two decades have witnessed, in the family, in the school, in professional and working life, belong there too.

But this is only one side. All the planetary afflictions, confusions and perils represent the other side, represent other consequences of the 400-year process of emancipation. Without it there would be no over-industrialisation, no ecological crisis, no population explosion, no nuclear arms race and so on. Since, moreover, we do not know how long this process will go on—and since the value and meaning of the whole thing cannot be assessed until it is at an end—emancipation cannot be what people would have us believe: the *one* principle which separates good from evil, for the sake of which history is alone worthwhile and upon which the historian has to orientate himself. He can do this if he wishes; for certain periods he may be able to do so more successfully than for others. In the last resort, however, a history that is written *merely* in terms of emancipation as the highest good and certain goal will always do violence to the complexity and ambivalence of the subject. (The style and manner are not so very different from the National Liberal historians who interpreted Brandenburg-Prussia since the Great Elector as the power preordained to lead Germany to national unification.)

I WOULD PUT my own credo in this way. It is no inescapable duty of the historian to serve so-called emancipation or to seek, as a historian, to exercise a political influence in any way whatever. He can do so; he is not obliged to. We can find examples where he derived creative energy for his work from his political enthusiasms, but also examples where political enthusiasm so distorted judgment of past epochs, situations, events and figures as to reduce history to shrill pamphleteering. The profession of pamphleteer may well be as honourable as that of historian, but the two activities should surely be kept apart.

As for "structural analysis" as against the history of events, the new history despises the old-fashioned narrative. Some young historians go so far as to see even in the history of structures—the history of the Prussian bureaucracy within a given period of time, or of Provençal agriculture in the 15th century—"disguised history of events." The histories of events are persecuted as the Grand Inquisitor persecuted heretics.

Obviously, structural analysis and the history of events both have their advantages and their dangers; and it goes without saying that structural analysis is not so very new either. We find it in Max Weber's historical sociology, in the more or less Socialist histories of the French Revolution (Jean Jaurès, Albert Mathiez, and other works of the 19th or early 20th century). On principle I shall not list names of living authors here; I should have to list too many, and yet too few.

The advantage of analysis is the sharpness of delineation gained through abstraction. Time

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appears to stand still, and reality does not "flow." Expressions like "flow" or "progress", I am well aware, are inevitably taken from the dimensions of space, not of time. Reality is divided up according to concepts: conditions of governance, value judgments, sources and acts of lawgiving, ways of regulating institutions and conflicts and so on, are subordinated to concepts in terms of which, as though incidentally, the course of events, acts of domestic and foreign policy, are then interpreted as a symptom or consequence. It is indeed possible to learn from such analyses, provided they are conducted by researchers who are freely seeking the truth, not straining to confirm a dogma.

But these are the dangers of conceptual analysis. The reality of a past society is rationalised from top to bottom, as though everything rhymed, everything obeyed one denominator according to which events were predetermined. This they never were; our future is open, and every future was open. More than that, in mere analysis the fullness of life, its multiplicity and contradictoriness, indeed its true humanity are lost. Thus, in one case I have in mind, when one reads a certain well-informed, intelligently executed "structural analysis" of the Hohenzollern Empire one gathers the impression that German society of that period must have been a complete, coherently interwoven nightmare. Which it quite certainly wasn't. The Prussian nobility as "an economically disintegrating class bitterly defending its anachronistic economic, social and political privileges" is an abstraction; as a hypothesis it may be well suited to explain certain positions or activities of the Conservative Party or the Farmers' Association. It utterly leaves out of account life styles such as we find described in the rich late novels of Theodor Fontane or of Eduard von Keyserling. Clearly, it does not help to explain why it was possible for an anti-Nazi Resistance movement, intellectually well reasoned and ready for any sacrifice, to arise precisely from the Prussian nobility!

SUCH ANALYSIS is involved with concepts which were already known to the historian in advance; it necessarily takes as its point of departure *Begriffe* derived from a different historical reality. Difficulties are bound to arise in transferring them from the original reality to the new one. Thus, for example, if Chancellor Bismarck's system of government is classified under the concept "Bonapartism" there will inevitably be a temptation to see principles at work in Bismarck's government that were quite alien to it (e.g., the plebiscite). Similarly, there will be a temptation to overlook facts that do not fit in with the concept; for instance, that Bismarck himself was a great parliamentarian; that parliament, the *Reichstag*, gained ever-increasing power during the Bismarck era; and that without a new anti-Bismarck majority in the *Reichstag*, arising out of elections, the Chancellor could never have been overthrown. All of which certainly does not fit in with the concept of "Bonapartism."

Historical reality never coincides exactly with the concepts we formulate, necessary as they are. If we seek to rationalise reality with their aid, we finally come up with such senseless assertions as the one which states that Hitler's mass murder of the Jews was an "inevitable product of late capitalism." The French historian Paul Veyne writes of Hitler's dictatorship:

> "We had to live through the experience of a nation which was for a hundred and fifty years the Athens of Europe stooping to a hitherto unknown depth of barbarity. We saw a petty bourgeois who had sunk into a Bohemian underworld unleash a war with two aims: to destroy the Jews, which belongs in the domain of the history of ideas and prejudices; and to conquer agricultural land for the Germans in the East, this latter being an ancient notion stemming from purely agrarian societies, the archaic hunger for more land, to our unbelieving amazement resuscitated in our age of industry and Professor Keynes. . . ."[2]

What does Paul Veyne mean by this? Certainly not that the Third Reich was a mere traffic accident. Nevertheless, it was in no way "inevitably present" or "in embryo" in Bismarck's civilised State that guaranteed its citizens far-reaching freedoms; nor in an even more distant past. There are historic events, there are fateful decisions and destinies which, however terrible they may be, however fraught with consequences, cannot be rendered perfectly transparent, cannot be rationalised by tracing them back entirely to earlier structures of society, economy, and power.

I WANT TO ADD a few remarks on what has been called "interpretational eclecticism"—not the only recently born verbal monstrosity with which, for better or worse, historians have to grapple. The expression implies the following

[2] Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'Histoire* (1971).

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reproach: such-and-such a historian, instead of sticking to one single master of analysis and interpretation, to his inspiring model and to his definitive hypothesis, has learned from several masters. Conceivably he takes his cue from Marx but occasionally—reprehensibly—also from Max Weber, say, or Sigmund Freud.

This criticism presupposes one of two things. Either: our human world obeys one single law, is entirely and regularly moved by one single motive or complex of motives, one single kind of conflict, so that it is unthinkable and quite out of place to start by asking a variety of questions and seeking basically different motivations, interconnections, causations. Or: the past does not exist at all in its own right but only for us; without the perceiving subject it would not be there at all and therefore, whether it will or no, it must fit into our categories; in any case, it cannot will anything, since it only exists through us.

Both presuppositions are erroneous. The first, that there is only *one* historical law, only *one* model which sets its stamp upon reality, is pure pseudo-intellectual superstition totally unsupported by human experience. To consider the second would take us into historical epistemology or "hermeneutics", a branch of knowledge whose importance I am far from denying but which it is impossible to enter into here. Personally, however, I would like to declare myself as a fairly pure empiricist, even a supporter of naïve realism, of the theory of correspondence, of common sense, or whatever other tags there may be, all of which mean the same thing. There is absolutely no reason why we should not understand the written thoughts of the past exactly as they were meant at the time of writing: whether we are dealing with a 17th-century political speech of Cromwell's, a letter of Cicero, or the laws of Hammurabi. Even then, I believe, we can grasp the thinking of the past and understand the actions arising out of it, despite the fact that the images and ideas are often quite alien to us. There are accounts, for example of human sacrifice among the Aztecs, the cutting out of the heart from the bodies of prisoners-of-war decked out in star-decorated garments, in which a completely intelligible explanation is offered. We can perfectly well understand the original meaning of the corpus of Roman law, for example, even if its significance has changed several times in the course of the centuries; for it is possible to distinguish precisely between the original meaning and later interpretations, and this has been very clearly demonstrated by a legal historian of our own day in respect of the basic principle of *Princeps lege absolutus.*

THE VIEW THAT CULTURES which are fundamentally different from ours are to be interpreted not in terms of their own categories, but of *our* categories—for example, the latest general concept of "socialisation"—calls for revision. I take "socialisation" to mean the armoury of instruments with the aid of which the unbelieving upper strata of society, conscious of their own interests, hold the mass of the people in check: the Family, School and Education, Church, Army, and Public Morality. This may well apply roughly—very roughly—to the Hohenzollern Empire, but does it apply to the Inca empire? If the all-powerful Inca ruler imagined he was protected by the Sun God and therefore allowed himself to be carried unarmed into the Spanish camp, with dire consequences, such an act cannot be "explained" by "socialisation." I am persuaded that the historian, even if he has no faith himself, must have a basic belief in the faith of the people of bygone cultures; otherwise he will not understand them and should keep his hands off.

I am also convinced that in the demand to subordinate the whole of the past to historical concepts formulated in our own day lies a hidden urge for domination, and a sinister arrogance. The will-to-power at work here is not so very different from the drive to subordinate nature to ourselves, to exploit and gut it for our purposes. To restore the rights of nature, the right to life of the animals and plants, may well be an incomparably more urgent task than to restore history: but the two tasks are interconnected. Civilisations which respected the past have also respected nature, and wonderfully adapted their settlements to the landscape. We still have relics of them, but will our new settlements ever be credited with this virtue?

THE AMBITION TO DOMINATE the past reaches an extreme in the negative spirit of inquisitors who want nothing so much as to sit in judgment. The whole of human history, as I recently read in the work of a young historian, is first of all to be condemned. Such a statement may simply appear silly, but it deserves some consideration, not only because it represents the extreme consequence of that unsympathetic desire to dominate, but also

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because it touches clumsily upon an inescapable, if insoluble problem. The view that everything done by mankind from time immemorial to the present day should in all cases have been done differently is meaningless. The opposite view, Hegel's view—"Whatever is real is reasonable (*Was wirklich ist, das ist vernunftig*)"—is intolerable to us, or at least intolerable to the present writer. I recall only Hegel's view on pre-Columbian America:

> We do indeed have some information about America and its culture, especially in Mexico and Peru, but only enough to tell us that it was an entirely natural culture which was bound to go under as soon as the spirit [by which he meant the European spirit] came near it. . . .

No, the Spanish atrocities in Mexico and Peru cannot be dismissed as easily as that. But what then?

In my opinion the historian, if he wishes to express his personal feelings in his work, after he has "described" or "explained", may indeed "regret." To regret is not the same as to condemn. If sorrow is part of a historian's temperament, as has often been the case, he is entitled to let it come into play. Is he also entitled to pass judgment? On the totality of events—the Pharaohs, Slavery in classical antiquity, the Feudal society of the Middle Ages—certainly not. On individual guilt, certainly; the guilt for crimes which were not in keeping with the level of civilisation in which they took place, which those who committed them must have known to be crimes, which were often not even necessary for the purposes they were supposed to serve.

In our own day I am thinking of Dresden and Hiroshima, of the Gulag Archipelago or of the guilt of those false German conservatives who, in January 1933, helped Adolf Hitler to power at a moment when it was by no means certain that he would come to power without their help. There is no shortage of examples of guilt and criminality.

ONCE MORE I come back to the antithesis: structural analysis *v.* history of events. "Events" may once have meant, or may also have meant, those things which I admired as a child in mural paintings in the arcades of the Munich Hofgarten: *Collapse of the Inn Bridge at Mühldorf with the Bohemians in Flight*, or *The Victory of Duke Louis the Rich at Giengen*, and the like. We have long ago ceased to mean such events. But one would have to be wilfully blind to deny that our century is also and especially rich, perhaps only too rich, in "events"—events that have affected our collective, and hence our personal destiny—and that these events or, if one prefers the new terminology, "major phenomena" are worthy of investigation and depiction. No one claims that events come out of nowhere. No one denies that they are hatched out by societies, States, groups of States within which, or between which, they take place. This does not mean that events or complexes of events are easily predictable. If there are still historians in the 21st century, they may perhaps really no longer study and write *our* history as "the history of events." But only because there were too many of them, because things happened too fast; because the historical researchers will be made dizzy by the torrent of events following on each other's heels and violently reversing each other. . . .

The historical *narrative* also has its dangers. It can omit whatever does not fit in with its construction, can smooth out, beautify, slide skilfully over questions which it cannot or will not resolve. The advantages of historical narrative are undeniable. It introduces order, something it shares with the novel, but order that has to stand in a reliable relationship to the subject of the narration. Whereas analysis individualises, narration can portray the whole complex of activity, powers, interests from the religious to the economic; groups and individuals; desires, fears, miscalculations, misunderstandings, evil spells; all in their mutual interaction. It does not assemble in categories, and it does not deduce from concepts; it describes. There have been many attempts convincingly to resolve the antithesis propounded by Dilthey: *Erklären/Verstehen*, to explain or to understand. I would only add this: there *need* not even be an antithesis between explanation and description. It is possible to explain by describing how one thing arose out of the other, how one thing affected another, or many things in conjunction. Obviously such an explanation through narration can reach a wider public than analysis, which is intended for the specialist; and it should always be the aim of history to operate on a broad field, to try to reach Everyman, without becoming untrue to itself.

THE LATEST TREND of historical research bans one special type of historical narration, biography, as being "undemocratic." The indict-

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ment is that it accepts individuals who make history at the expense of the mass of men; it tends to glorify the single individual and so destroys a systematic approach to rational comprehension.

My answer: there have been such biographies, for instance the biographies of Bismarck written by Germany's national-liberal historians (to whom, be it said in passing, Bismarck himself would have vigorously objected). Occasional exceptions do not refute the principle. But the great disadvantage of general or universal historical narrative—*The Decline and Fall of the Ancient World, The Rise of American Civilisation, England under the Stuarts*, and so on—is that it has no true centre. Biography has a centre, and the essential historical significance of this centre, the hero of the biography, is in no way prejudiced by the mere fact of his having been chosen as a protagonist. A political leader may have decided almost nothing during his life, may have achieved almost nothing lasting, and yet be a mirror of his age. He may have been the target of forces which pressed in upon him from all sides, which he sought vainly to control, to link, to neutralise, so that the story of his life introduces us to a very complex field of tensions. If someone, having read Marx or Hegel rather than Herodotus and Plutarch, wishes to call such a network of effects and counter-effects "dialectical", I have no serious objection.

Still, I cannot help feeling surprised that our new humanists have so little sympathy for exceptional ingenuity, for human effort and achievement and suffering above the humdrum average. If complete and perfect democracy means that everyone in every essential respect is equal, that it must also always have been so in retrospect —that the individual is altogether uninteresting and history is to be reduced to statistics, price, wage and population curves, data on production, consumption, and hours of work, on disease and longevity—then democratic aspiration threatens to turn into something that was certainly not meant by it originally. I remain convinced that historical narrative, including biography, must remain; and it will remain, or return.

THE YEARS DURING WHICH scientific and didactic theories were forever replacing one another, being advanced only to be withdrawn, revised, and propounded afresh, during which *Praxis* threatened to suffocate in the rarified atmosphere are now drawing to a close. (The current German phrase for this new "end-of-ideology" is *Tendenzwende*.) They may have been necessary. There is a time for theory and a time for practice. In the Western community of historians, if I read the signs correctly, the desire to get back to the subject itself will win out. At least I hope it will, if only so that ultimately we who write and teach history will not be driven into that mental state in which no theory whatever can help any more.

City Buildings

To see men move at ease along the girders
Of a tall building, straddling, or hanging,
Utterly at home among the dark frames
Of its body, drawing at every spanner's turn to
Tautness its dozen floors—to feel their easy
Arrogance with steel and tons of innards,
The liberties of jokes they fling across
Its stiffest angles, blunts the afterwards.

For afterwards the building never tires,
Solid and stone-faced, of discounting men.
Always it is set in the exchange
Of glass-eyed looks with others of its kind
Across a street above a pavement.
The shapes within it, moving on a floor,
Are momentary. Till the wreckers come
It holds itself aloof, is home to no one.

Frank Ormsby

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L. P. Wilkinson

From the Point of View of Antiquity

Classical Approaches

III. Nudism in Deed & Word

LET ME FIRST define and clarify. By "nudism in deed" I mean a wilful overcoming of the taboos which have established themselves among civilised peoples against exposing certain parts of the body. Of course primitive man went naked, and remains so in some parts of the world: and some tribes are coy about parts we are not ashamed of exposing yet surprised at what missionaries bid them conceal. To others obscenity would be a meaningless conception. But by "nudism" I mean a display of total nakedness, including the genital zones, to which among civilised peoples the feeling of shame is primarily attached. How fundamental this feeling of shame is, the Book of Genesis testifies: for the Jews it was the first element of human sensibility that seemed to demand an aetiological myth.

By "nudism in word" I mean the wilful overcoming of the corresponding taboo which early led to the use of euphemisms about the genital organs and their functions.

The two kinds of "nudism" are not unconnected. Besides concerning the same field of ideas, they often have a common motivation, exhibitionism and a desire to shock. Quintilian actually uses the phrase "naked words." But when nudism re-emerges, whether in life or art, among peoples who have left primitive nakedness far behind them we should not assume a single common motive, any more than for the origin of clothing. There is such a thing, for instance, as religious nudism and religious obscenity.

In modern times there have been sporadic outcrops of nudism, whether on Scandinavian beaches, or in suburban societies (which have generally been regarded as cranky but not orgiastic), or among dissident communities such as the immigrant Dukhobors in western Canada. After the Russian Revolution some of the young expressed their sense of liberation by nudism, which shocked the Old Bolsheviks. But what makes the subject topical—even if we disregard "streaking", which appears to have been a transient prank, and the extension to "pop" festivals of the previously secluded nudism of societies—is the recent invasion of the world of entertainment by full frontal nudity. It is only a few years since newspapers gave headlines to the brief appearance in this state of an actress in a Swedish film.[1] Next came *Hair* (1968) and *Oh, Calcutta!* (1969), nude Dutch ballet dancers, and a Desdemona strangled in the nude in defiance of Shakespeare's intentions. Some call this exploration, others exploitation. More important for my particular purpose was the appearance in 1956 of Kenneth Clark's admirable book *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art*; for it was the Greeks who, by their adoption of nudity in athletics and elevation of it in art, made the most significant contribution to our subject.

COMPLETE NUDITY IS VERY RARE in ancient Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian art. It is almost confined to captives, on whom it

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[1] As to films the process is traced step by step by John Trevelyan, in *What the Censor Saw* (1973).

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was inflicted as a degradation. This idea of degradation occurs also in Homer. Odysseus threatens to teach Thersites his place by stripping from him the garments that cover his "shame" (*aidos*); and the body of Hector that Achilles drags behind his chariot round the walls of Troy is naked.[2] Of course the nakedness of captives might be simply the result of despoliation; but the idea that nakedness could be cause for mockery persists, being attributed, for instance, to barbarians by Plato. On the other hand religious nakedness was not uncommon. It plays a part in initiation ceremonies. People praying or processing are represented as naked. So are mourners. On vases of the early so-called Geometric period women parade naked before the dead. Alexander the Great and his friends processed naked round the tomb of Achilles as a mark of homage. In some societies women expose themselves to the sky to attract rain; in others prophets and prophetesses bare themselves to inspiration. On the other hand nakedness can be apotropaic, to ward off danger. We need not speculate here on the ideas that lay behind such customs; but what seems clear is that nakedness was felt to be something of special significance.

As to our perception of Greek custom, there is a terminological difficulty that obfuscates the evidence, in that the word *gymnos*, which normally means naked, *can* be used to mean lightly clad. But it is much too often assumed to mean the latter by translators who cannot divest themselves of our preconceptions.

Works of art show that in Minoan-Mycenean times even acrobats and others engaging in physical exercise wore at least a kind of tight-fitting shorts. In Homer heroes strip to sleep, but in public show the same modesty as most moderns. Odysseus, emerging from the bushes after his shipwreck to accost Nausicaa, holds a branch before him to hide his nakedness; and he asks her and her companions to withdraw while he washes in a stream. He is careful also not to strip wholly naked for his wrestling-match with Irus. It is true that when a hero took a bath handmaids assisted, but that can happen to anyone today in Helsinki or Tokyo. The only thing that strikes us as strange is when a guest is bathed and anointed by his hostess, as Telemachus is by Nestor's youngest daughter, and Odysseus by Circe, even indeed by Helen when he came disguised into Troy.

From early times, however, there was one feature of the Greek scene, a feature which persisted into the classical period, that has always struck modern people as incongruous in what was in so many ways a highly civilised culture: the ubiquity of phallic symbols, magic promoters of fertility. Enormous and astonishing ones lined the Sacred Way at Delos, and were carried in Dionysiac processions. The leather ones worn by the actors in Attic Comedy could be, of course, the subject of jokes; but in origin they were serious adjuncts to the rites of Dionysus. Nor had phalli lost their religious significance for the commons of Athens even in Aristophanes' time—as can be deduced from the superstitious dismay that took hold of these when, just before the Sicilian Expedition was due to set sail, they awoke to find that in the night the Herms, the square pedestals surmounted by busts of deities which were a common sight in the streets and squares of the city, had been mutilated. To some extent, therefore, both sexes were accustomed to sights which to us would be more shocking even than male nakedness in public.

THERE ARE VARIOUS ACCOUNTS of how nudity invaded Greek athletics.

It would seem that something revolutionary occurred at the 15th Olympic Games in 720 B.C. Thucydides however asserts that it was introduced "quite recently", and Plato a generation later says the same. The former attributes it to Spartans, the latter to Cretans followed by Spartans—Dorians in either case. It has been noted that in art the prevalence of nudity characterises Greeks of the peninsula and Cyclades rather than those of Asia Minor and its offshore islands; and as for barbarians, Herodotus remarks that among them it is shameful even for a man to be seen naked, implying that for Greeks it was a commonplace. There is some doubt as to when nakedness was introduced for running, in which it would actually be a disadvantage, and how consistently it was maintained before the 5th century; but at least it seems to have been adopted early and permanently for boxing and wrestling.[3] In any

[2] A millennium later Tigranes, King of Armenia, submitted himself naked to the mercy of Pompey.

[3] E. N. Gardiner points to two black-figured vases on which runners are portrayed wearing jockstraps; but in the wrestling-school at least nudity was practically invariable in the 6th century, to judge from vase-paintings. The great age of Spartan athletics was 720–576 B.C.

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case, however, what matters is not how or when the breakthrough took place, but the fact that it did, and that nudity in athletics and gymnastics was a peculiarity to Greeks of which they became proud. Even older men continued to exercise naked. Male spectators were admitted to gymnasia and wrestling-schools as well as to athletic contests, but not females. At the Olympic Games, by one account, no woman might cross the River Alpheus for a stated number of days (though Pausanias says that unmarried girls could watch, and a seat was reserved for the priestess of Demeter). Women had their own games there at another time, the *Heraea*, in which unmarried girls ran in short tunics with their right shoulder bare.

The exercises made young men proud of their bodies, exposed as they were for a large part of the day, and ashamed not to keep them in the best possible condition; and until professionalism in the Hellenistic Age led to muscular over-development of certain parts, they attained a high standard of harmonious beauty. Greeks acquired an intense appreciation of the male human body, as a whole, observed in all sorts of poses. Chaerophon exclaims in Plato's *Charmides*:

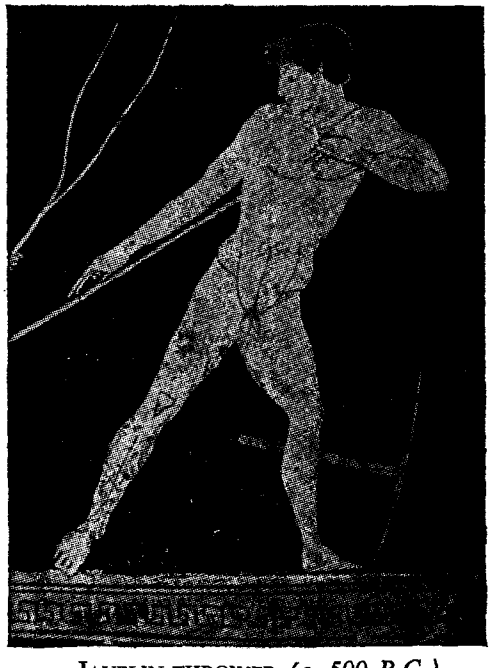
> "What a handsome face he has; but if he were naked you would forget he had a face, he is so beautiful in every way."[4]

Of course there was an element of the erotic in this appreciation. The statues in gymnasia usually included one of Eros; and it can be no accident that the heyday of Greek amateur athletics coincided with that of homosexual love, which prevailed in precisely those parts of the Hellenic world that were most given to these pursuits. But the body can express other intense human emotions also, and body and spirit were felt as one.

There was however, an even stronger element of idealisation, a pride in nudity, a feeling that there was in it something heroic and indeed divine. The Games themselves, we must remember, were religious festivals. This feeling about divinity and the male nude was progressively concentrated in the worship of Apollo.

Appreciation of the male human body found expression, especially at Athens, in art. Male nudes had been common on the Dipylon vases of the 8th century, though as yet highly schematised. In the 7th century they became established as the proper subject of fine art, hence the series of statues of youths called *kouroi*. Adulation of successful athletes, heroes on earth, led to the commissioning of statues of them. In these the body was not neglected at the expense of the head, a fact emphasised by the rarity of busts in the classical period. Intent observation produced a gradual progression in naturalism, culminating in a sudden leap forward about 480 B.C., in the great days of the repulse of the Persians, which produced the marble youth of Critios on the Acropolis. But it was, in sculpture at least, an idealised naturalism, behind which lie perceptions, and apparently actual canons, of harmonious proportion, whose inspiration comes from a mathematical aesthetic sense as much as from the actualities of human bodies. In the words of Kenneth Clark:

> "What both Reynolds and Blake meant by ideal beauty was really the diffused memory of that peculiar physical type which was developed in Greece between 480 and 440 B.C., and which, in varying degrees of intensity and consciousness, furnished the mind of Western man with a pattern of perfection from the Renaissance to the present century."



JAVELIN-THROWER *(c. 500 B.C.)*

[4] Everyone gazed at him "as though he were a statue", a phrase that would hardly occur to a modern writer.

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These statues were of *young* men only. The Greeks felt strongly the difference between exposure in the young and the older. Thus the early Spartan poet Tyrtaeus, after exclaiming what an ugly and shameful sight it is to see an elder, wounded in battle, with his flesh laid bare, grasping his bloodied privates in both hands, immediately adds, "but in the young anything is seemly." Similarly, for statues of older males some drapery was generally considered proper. The young male nude remained the favourite subject of sculptors, and new formulations continued to be made right down to late Hellenistic times.

THE QUESTION ARISES, how far does nudity in Greek art reflect nudity in real life? When art re-emerges after the long Dark Age and human figures eventually appear on the so-called Geometric pottery of the 8th century, men are often (and women quite often) depicted as naked. The figures are however highly schematised; and in some cases it is difficult to tell the sexes apart, though women may be distinguished by token triangular projections for breasts and later by hatched skirts. The treatment was conceptual rather than realistic. It does appear, however, that nakedness in women is associated in the paintings with religion and mourning, and occasionally with strenuous indoor work such as spinning and weaving; and on one and the same vase they may be shown as naked in one context, clothed in another. To this extent conformity with life may have been a guiding principle.

The nudity that occurs in 7th- and 6th-century vases seems discontinuous from the Geometric tradition. It is related not only to the introduction of athletic nudity, but to the development of technique that substituted for abstract design representational painting which was always seeking more perfect naturalism. Humanity has become the centre of interest. But we still have to ask: How far does art mirror real life? Thus warriors are sometimes represented as exposed in the parts below their cuirass. Exposure for either magic, i.e. apotropaic, purposes or alternatively for psychological shock effect, is not unknown among primitive warriors. It is conceivable that even in 7th- or 6th-century Greece some men fought in this guise, without the undertunic worn in Homeric times, though it seems unlikely. But when it comes to warriors depicted as fighting in only a helmet and shield, or to legendary heroes grappling stark naked with enemies, it is clear that artistic idealisation has taken over.

Women, on the other hand, rarely appear naked on vases of this period except within certain limits. The exceptions include scenes from mythology where it would be appropriate, as in the case of Atalanta, or scenes from Bacchic revels (though often the Maenads are fully clad), and erotic scenes of nymphs and satyrs. For the rest, women are sometimes shown as naked at the bath. But above all they appear naked in dances, routs, and men's drinking parties, engaged in what is now known as group sex, or playing the flute; and here we may be sure they are *hetaerae*. It would seem that mythology offered a convenient excuse for licentious fancy, but that otherwise the paintings reflect distinctions that existed in real life. This fashion began with the wine-cups produced from about 530 B.C. and lasted some 50 years. It was always strongest on the Greek mainland, becoming weaker progressively towards the east, among the Ionians sensitive to Persian influence.

WHAT IS LESS CLEAR is, how typical the vase-paintings are. In the first place, artistic fashions easily establish themselves, so that one kind of subject matter not at all typical of ordinary life may loom unduly large. Also, for our present purpose, the overall conspectus may be distorted by the fact that from the 6th century, as artists became more competent in the naturalistic rendering of the human form, there developed a considerable industry in what we should call pornographic art, emanating particularly from Corinth, the erotic capital of Greece. You could justify anything by giving a man engaged in erotic activity a horse's tail and calling him a satyr.

The extent of this industry is very hard to estimate, because museums have hidden away so many specimens in their cellars; and the producers of books on vase-painting have tended to include only an occasional example, at most, among their illustrations. And indeed, as to evidence from art in general, given the vast amount of material scattered throughout the museums of the world, even though some of it is published in learned journals, the ordinary investigator can only rely on what is revealed to him by the lifelong specialist, which is not the case with literature. Of course not all the love-scenes depicted deserve to be classed as pornographic; they can be tender and moving, in

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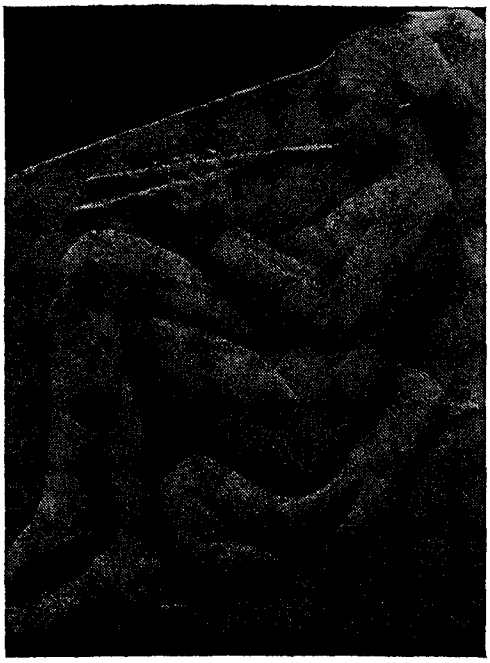
accordance with what was best in the Greek spirit.

Vases were an intimate form of art. In full-sized sculpture, designed as it was mainly for public display, we have, even from as late as the 5th century, scarcely any female nudes. The earliest is the so-called Esquiline Venus. She is, incidentally, mathematically proportioned, but not as a close copy of a model would be (the head-length being taken as the unit, she is seven heads tall, one head separates her breasts, one her breasts and navel, and one her navel and crotch). Another is the flute-girl on the side of the so-called Ludovisi Throne, also now at Rome. On this the central figure rising on the front panel between two attendants is draped. She is commonly taken to be Aphrodite rising from the sea; and it is a remarkable fact that until the 4th century even the goddess of love is nearly always represented, by contrast with Apollo, as draped. One remembers the legends of Actaeon and Tiresias, respectively torn by hounds and blinded, for even accidentally seeing a goddess naked.

Transparent draperies for women appear in Phidias' work and we have a nude Aphrodite in a late 5th-century bronze. (We must not forget that marble statues we know may have had predecessors—bronzes long since melted down and large-scale paintings long since lost.) But what seems to have made the breakthrough for the female nude in sculpture was the 4th-century vogue for the *grandes cocottes*, who were proud to model for statues of Aphrodite. Aphrodite succeeded Apollo as the favourite deity of the age. It was Praxiteles who established the classic female nude. Even so, the idea that Aphrodite should be draped died hard. While Praxiteles made for the Cnidians a nude statue of her modelled on the courtesan Cratine,[5] which was to become the most famous statue of antiquity, he made a draped one for the Coans. (The Cnidian Aphrodite, incidentally, has the same proportions as the Esquiline Venus.)



HETAERA *(c. 470 B.C.)*

In these nudes, as in those of males, the Greek idealising tendency is strongly expressed. We find it as early as in the dying Niobid of about 450 B.C. in the Museo delle Terme at Rome, whose dress is slipping off so that she is virtually nude. Aristotle was to find a way of describing what the idealising artist does in terms of his own philosophy:

> "The artist gives us knowledge of Nature's unrealised aims."

This development was not merely aesthetic: it reflected the new interest in women of the Age of Enlightenment.

AT A MEETING OF the Archaeological Institute in London (on 8 June 1877) Madame Sophia Schliemann gave an address on the contribution of Greece to civilisation. When she had finished, Heinrich Schliemann rose and asked permission to add something, and it was this:

> "Another of the agents instrumental in producing a high perfection of art in ancient Greece was the entire absence of our present code of conventional proprieties and the perfect freedom which the fair sex enjoyed regarding dress, which was consequently in analogy to the hot climate and hardly amounted to anything at all."

"(A laugh)" *The Times* account reports in brackets.

"Being thus all his life", continued Schliemann undeterred, "surrounded with masterpieces of nature, the ancient Greek artist was at liberty constantly to study the symmetry and anatomy of the female body, and he could produce

[5] Probably her and not as another tradition had it, the more famous Phryne, of whom a nude statue in bronze was dedicated at Delphi.

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wonders by merely copying what he saw." Mr Gladstone, billed to speak next, felt constrained to disagree. "The nation at large", he said, "were very decorously clad: their persons were wholly covered. The exception, which proved the rule, was Sparta, the least Greek of all Hellas in the fine feeling for art."

Now, in the first place, to what extent *was* Sparta an exception as to female nudity in everyday life? Our evidence is conflicting. Plutarch, writing in the 2nd century A.D., says that Lycurgus encouraged the girls there to go naked (*gymnos*) in processions and when dancing and singing at certain festivals, in the presence and under the eyes of the youths. Nor, he adds, was there anything disgraceful in these strippings (*apodyseis*) of maidens, since modesty attended them and incontinence was banished; and they produced in them rather habits of simplicity and an ardent desire for physical well-being. Moreover, he says, there were in these customs incentives to marriage; for the youths were attracted by a force which was, in Plato's words, not dynamic but erotic. Such language implies, though not inescapably, that complete nudity was involved, and Roman writers certainly assumed that this was the case.

It may, however, depend on what period of time is in question, for as to the 5th century B.C. we have striking evidence to the contrary in Euripides. In his *Andromache* Peleus inveighs against Spartan women for shamelessness in going out to exercise among men with thighs bared and dress girt up. If they had been completely naked, *a fortiori* he would surely have said so; and there exist also Spartan statuettes from the 6th and 5th centuries of girls running in short skirts. Further, a scholiast on Euripides' *Hecuba* says that they were dressed in a single skirt (*monochitones*) in their athletic contests. So it seems likely that, in this period at least, they wore something rather less scanty than they do, for instance, in Degas' famous picture in the National Gallery, *Girls in ancient Sparta inciting the boys to wrestle*. Nor, for that matter, need we suppose that they wrestled *with* boys rather than with each other in the company of boys. It may also be relevant that Plato in the *Laws*, a work which borrows much from Spartan customs, prescribes that only girls below the age of puberty shall race naked: those aged 13 and over must be suitably clad. Likewise, when he proposes that before marriages are fixed up, in order that prospective husbands and fathers-in-law should have close personal knowledge of eligible girls, sportive mixed dances should be arranged, he stipulates that both youths and girls should be unclad only as far as modesty permits in either case.

As to the rest of Greece, Schliemann was of course wildly mistaken, whereas Gladstone only failed to recall the peculiar athletic and gymnastic nudity of males. Dorian women were not so very scantily clothed in their *peplos*, and Ionian ones were draped from head to foot in their *chiton* with its many folds. Nor did women parade themselves in public. The archaic Athenian statues of women called *korai* are fundamentally male *kouroi* with genitals suppressed, small breasts added, and clinging draperies superimposed. Artists had few opportunities in everyday life of studying women's bodies as they studied men's in the gymnasia (though more perhaps than the boy H. G. Wells, whose first erotic fantasies, in an age of flounces and crinolines, were perforce inspired by the nearest thing he had ever seen to the latent female form, the symbolic figures of Britannia, Erin, etc. in Tenniel's *Punch* cartoons). Though prostitutes might no doubt have been hired to pose, this seems not to have been done in the archaic and early classical periods. What artists were successful in representing was what they could observe in everyday life.

Not but what it seems probable that *hetaerae* or slave girls appeared in the nude as mute characters on the comic stage. This has been hotly denied, but also maintained by distinguished scholars from Wilamowitz to the present day. At least two jokes in Aristophanes are inexplicable otherwise—unless one prefers to believe that the parts were played by males in flesh-coloured tights realistically painted. There are several other places in his comedies where female nudes are introduced and attention is drawn to their attractions. Sometimes the introduction is gratuitous, and would have little justification in the audience's eyes unless it really did display an attractive woman—though here the nudity can be no more than plausibly alleged on the analogy of the two cases I have mentioned.

THE YOUNGER AND MORE ADVENTUROUS Plato of the *Republic*, having decided on principle that women should be eligible as guardians just as much as men, followed this to its logical conclusion:

"Many of the things we are talking about

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> [Plato says] would seem absurdly unconventional if they were put into practice. The most absurd sight—don't you think?—would be women stripping with the men in the wrestling schools, and not only the young ones, but even the older ones, as happens in our gymnasia where men continue to cultivate gymnastics even when they are wrinkled and no longer pleasant to look at."

Plato is at pains to urge that one must not be deterred by ridicule from putting principles into effect. Male nudity in the gymnasium (he alleges) was quite a recent innovation, and though wags may have laughed at it at first, now only barbarians did: the same might prove to be the case with female nudity.

Another defence of nudism on principle was produced in this same 4th century, by the Cynic sect. Holding that life should be lived according to nature, they challenged all conventions. One of the corollaries was a cult of shamelessness (*anaideia*). Diogenes is reported to have performed sexual acts in public ; and he too thought that women should exercise along with men. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, inherited this defiance of shame. "What is natural cannot be disgraceful"—in the familiar Latin formulation, *naturalia non sunt turpia*; and nakedness was adjudged more natural than shame. But how far such doctrinaire teaching affected the conduct of people at large in the Hellenistic Age is hard to determine.

THE ROMANS' ATTITUDE to nudity was originally that of most barbarians. It was degrading for a citizen to be seen naked.

Cicero quotes with approval a line from Ennius to the effect that stripping among citizens is the origin of vice; and he attributes the same view to the younger Scipio. Competitive athletics and gymnastics were a spectacle, something put on by professionals, not a way of life for citizens, and such indeed they had become in contemporary Greece. People had their slaves trained as athletes. And even under the Empire, when Roman citizens had begun to compete, complete nudity was long excluded; so that Tacitus could say in disapproval of Nero's inauguration of games, "The next step will be that people will be compelled to strip naked." Boys did wrestle, however, and Seneca deplores people who sat and watched them:

> "For we are beset [Seneca says] by vices that are not even Roman. What a scandal!"

Nero encouraged adult Romans to wrestle and box, but in Domitian's Capitoline Games competition was left mainly to Greek athletes. We know of only one Roman citizen in the 1st century A.D. who appeared in the stadium. The native Roman spectacles were military exercises such as the equestrian Troy Game, re-introduced by Augustus and described in Virgil's Fifth Aeneid. Young men did practise field sports, such as discus- and javelin-throwing, and ball games, in the Campus Martius, but not in the nude, so far as we know.

As to art, the influx of Greek statues that began in the 3rd century B.C. accustomed the Romans to nudity, especially in those of the gods. Greek works of art were copied, as in the beautiful female nude painted on a wall in the House of the Mysteries at Pompeii. Portrait heads of deified emperors were placed, with tasteless incongruity, on idealised nude bodies slavishly imitated from statues of gods of the great Greek period. The result is as embarrassing as Canova's nude Napoleon. But the true Roman statue was always of a man in toga or armour. There was, however, one notable exception: Hadrian's favourite Antinoüs. After his death there was a proliferation of portrait statues and busts of him, about 500 of which survive, mostly copies of ones made from the life. These include the only important nudes produced under Rome (the nudity denoted deification). It would seem that his mysterious, melancholy grace inspired some artist or artists with a direct apperception of male beauty unknown for centuries; and, again in the words of Kenneth Clark, "The physical character of Antinoüs is still perceptible when, after its long banishment, the Apollonian nude returns in the person of Donatello's David. . . ."

On the stage, Roman actors, who were all males except in the mime, wore a sort of loincloth or jockstrap called *subligar* or *subligaculum* as a precaution against involuntary exposure. There was one exceptional occasion, the annual festival of the Floralia, no doubt originally a fertility festival. At this the performances were by women prostitutes, and obscenity was the order of the day. As a culmination they stripped at the bidding of the audience. There is a story that on one occasion the people held back from this because of the presence of that paragon of

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virtue, the younger Cato; but at a hint from a friend he tactfully withdrew so as not to spoil the fun. There also became popular in the Greek part of the Roman world what was known as the Pyrrhic Dance, a representation, sometimes by well-born young people, of mythological subjects. Apuleius describes one at Corinth, a Judgment of Paris in which Mercury, a beautiful youth, wore only a cloak, and Venus only a transparent drapery which a breath of wind wafted aside. Off the stage, too, "see-through" clothes, generally of Coan silk, became fashionable by Augustan times in permissive circles, and are duly deprecated by moralists. Later the Christians in particular denounced all forms of nude exhibition, including the Floralia and the erotic nudity which had by then become common in the theatrical and aquatic spectacles of the Empire.

BUT IF THE ROMANS "in their most high and palmy days" rejected the nudity of Greek athletics as corrupting, they made up for this by developing far more than the Greeks the institution of warm and cold indoor baths, which the Greeks considered suitable mainly for the sick and aged, but which had thoroughly taken hold of all classes in Italy by the end of the Republic. The baths, with their recreational and cultural facilities, became for the Romans a way of life, as the gymnasia had become for the Greeks. In these the wearing of a *subligar* was optional, at least for males, and probably exceptional. Young men also plunged into the Tiber after exercising in the Campus Martius. Cicero accuses Clodia of acquiring gardens on the river bank opposite for the purpose of making assignations with bathers. But whether or not they wore anything, we are not told.

In early times, and later too in less opulent towns, men and women bathed at different hours. But separate baths, or sections of baths, for women began to be introduced in the 2nd century B.C. Even upper class women such as Augustus' mother frequented them. Women wore a *subligar*, perhaps a bikini outfit like that of the ball-playing girls in the well-known mosaic from Piazza Armerina in Sicily, or even a larger bathing dress. The divinity Fortuna Virilis (luck with Men) was worshipped, we are told, by the poorer class of women in the men's baths, because there those parts of the human body are uncovered which seek women's favour. (Her festival was on April 1.) In the general permissiveness of the Empire mixed bathing became more widely prevalent. It was forbidden by Hadrian, but ineffectively, as repeated prohibitions by later Emperors show. This does not mean that respectable matrons indulged in it. Quintilian, in fact, calls it the sort of thing adulteresses do; and it was another of the practices condemned by Christian writers.

A Roman father and son did not bathe together after the son attained puberty. This taboo of embarrassment is not peculiar to Romans, as the story of Noah and his sons in Genesis reminds us. But several ancient writers comment on the peculiarity that a Roman father-in-law and son-in-law also would not bathe together. Was this relationship felt to be unusually close? Catullus says surprisingly to his Lesbia, "I loved you then not as the common man loves his mistress, but as a father loves his sons and sons-in-law."

SO MUCH FOR THE DIFFERENCES between Greece and Rome as to nudism in deed. One might sum up by saying that in Greece, in the classical period, athletic nudism encouraged an appreciation of the young male form which was not without erotic undertones—unique, a source of pride, numinous and infinitely fruitful in the realm of art; whereas the Romans, from an instinctive and not abnormal recoil from Greek nudity and homosexuality, gradually relaxed their inhibitions, encouraged both by Hellenistic influence and by the eventual craze for public baths.

AND NOW FOR "nudism in word." When Homer's Odysseus, threatening to strip

ATHLETES (*c. 500 B.C.*)

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Thersites, speaks of the garments that cover his "shame", not his "genitals", he is using a euphemism which shows that sexual words as well as sexual deeds were already a subject of taboos.

Naked words as well as naked deeds had their part in religion. There was a tradition that when the mourning Demeter came to Eleusis in her search for Persephone, she was cheered and made to laugh either by an obscene exposure or an obscene joke of a servant-girl. This was an aetiological myth for the fact that obscene acts and language were a feature of her festivals in historical times. No doubt the real reason was that these festivals originated in fertility rites. As L. R. Farnell says of the festival of the Thesmophoria at Athens:

> "There was *aeschrologia*—badinage of an undoubtedly indecent kind . . . and this was no mere casual and licentious *jeu d'esprit* . . . but a conscientious duty steadily performed by matrons whose standard of chastity was probably as high as our own and ideas of refinement in other respects very like our own, the object of this, as of all the rest of the ritual, being to stimulate the fertilising powers of the earth and the human frame."

But euphemism was normal, as is shown by the use of "the so-and-so" (*to deina*), or words such as "foot" (*pous*), for the penis, and of "the shameful things" (*aidoia*, in Latin *pudenda*), as the ordinary word for genitals.

Aristotle rationalised verbal modesty:

> "There is nothing [he writes in the *Politics*], that a legislator should be more careful to outlaw than indecency of speech; for the light utterance of shameful words soon leads to shameful actions. The young especially should never be allowed to hear or repeat anything of the sort."[6]

Aristophanes, of course, had notoriously used the frankest words; but that was no doubt to raise a laugh just because they were shocking. Aristotle notes however that while indecency of language was thought amusing in the Old Comedy of the 5th century (that of Aristophanes), the New Comedy of the 4th (that of Menander) relied rather on innuendo. And Plato the philosopher is particularly euphemistic. Aeschines, in his speech against Timarchus, apologises profusely to the jury for the words he is obliged to use as well as the subject he has to deal with.

> "As for the offences and outrages that Pittalacus did to Timarchus, I would rather die than describe them to you in words."

This suggests that words could shock ordinary citizens too.

But, like nudism in deed, nudism in word became involved in the controversy between the champions of nature and convention (*physis* and *nomos*). The primitive idea that a name is intimately connected with the person or thing that bears it was introduced into philosophy by Heraclitus, who held that language was natural in origin. Plato in his *Cratylus*, while supporting Heraclitus' theory in general, allowed for a considerable influence of convention.[7] But the Cynics believed that everything had its natural word, behind all the conventional euphemisms (metaphors, etc.), and that it was one's duty to use it in accordance with the principle of shamelessness. And this view was inherited by some of the Stoics.

Cicero wrote an interesting letter on this subject to his familiar friend Papirius Paetus, in reply to one in which Paetus had apparently referred to the penis by its natural name (*nomen proprium* or *nomen suum* in Latin) of "*mentula*."[8] In it he summarises, with Latin illustrations substituted for the Greek, a defence by a cynicising Stoic of the thesis that there is no such thing as obscenity in deed or word. He cites scenes from a comedy and three tragedies which would be obscene if the matter were expressed in naked words, but which are felt to be unobjectionable because it is not. But, says the Stoic, actions in themselves, sexual intercourse, for instance, are not obscene; and if the thing or action is not obscene, *a fortiori* the words describing it cannot

[6] Aristotle also wishes to banish obscene pictures, but makes the interesting exception of those in the temples of deities at whose festivals obscenity is in order.

[7] Plato did acknowledge the objection, obvious to us, that it was nature to barbarians to use words different from those of the Greeks.

[8] Cicero observes that the word penis itself (tail) is really a euphemism, but one which by frequent use has now come to seem just as obscene as the *nomen proprium*; but to Augustine "penis" was still an unobjectionable term whereas "the sordid and common word" would not be.

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be. Again, why should certain innocent words be avoided because they happen to have an alternative obscene meaning? So the whole idea of obscenity is a mare's nest, and the Stoic concludes, "The wise man will call a spade a spade!" But Cicero simply dismisses the case out of hand, saying:

> "I am glad that there is no word you feel you cannot use to me; but for my part I shall observe, and continue to observe (being so conditioned), the decency of Plato."

At the time when he wrote that letter Cicero was studying Panaetius, the gentlemanly Stoic who had been attached to the younger Scipio, for his *De Officiis*. No doubt Panaetius dissented from the Cynicising branch; for Cicero here turns against it its own argument from Nature. Nature has tucked away the parts of our body that are unsightly though necessary, and human modesty has followed her; for all healthy-minded people conceal those parts. Nor do they call them or their functions by their real names. We should not listen to the Cynics and Cynico-Stoics who taunt us with inconsistency for thinking it disgraceful to name some things which are not disgraceful to do, while calling by their real names some things that are so, such as robbery and fraud. Their whole philosophy is an offence against decent feeling (*verecundia*), which is an essential element of the right and honourable. Let us rather follow Nature, Cicero says, and shun everything that offends our eyes or ears.

Cicero himself was not above obscene innuendo. Thus he could not resist taunting Clodius at a casual encounter with a punning allusion to his reputed incest with his sister, though he admits to Atticus that this joke may not have been in the best consular taste ("*parum consulare*"). But he does consistently deprecate obscene language, which he calls unworthy not only of the Forum but of the society of civilised people.[9] He warns orators against using words that have an alternative meaning which is obscene, and even against accidental collocations of syllables that would produce what sounded like an obscene word, with examples that throw an interesting light on Roman salacity (an increasing tendency to which Quintilian was to deplore); and he deprecates metaphors, however apt, that are obscene, such as calling Glaucia the ordure of the Senate house, or saying that by the death of Africanus the state had been castrated. The admired Stoic Posidonius had made a long list of acts so disgraceful that the wise man would not do them even to save his country. Cicero thought it unbecoming even to have mentioned some of them. The same line is taken by his admirer Quintilian. He is content with what he calls "the old Roman custom of decency" (*Romanus pudor*). This he says he will maintain by observing silence on the subject; but that doesn't prevent him from giving shortly afterwards warning examples as astonishing as Cicero's of unintentional *double entendres* and collocations of syllables producing obscene words.

The encyclopaedist Celsus, who wrote under Tiberius, expresses embarrassment when he comes, in his section on Medicine, to deal with genito-urinary diseases. He says that the names of the parts affected are more tolerable in their Greek forms, which often occur in medical writings and discourse; whereas Latin terms for obscene things have not become acceptable by usage, so that it is hard to deal with them with due regard for both decency and science. But he has decided that he should not be deterred by that, both so as not to omit any cure he has heard of and because it is particularly important to learn about the parts that people are least willing to show to each other. Thus when dealing with what the Greeks call *enterokele* and *epiplokele* he adds that Latin has a common but improper term, "*hernia*."

It does seem that the Romans were as squeamish as we have traditionally been. They had various phrases of apology for calling a spade a spade.[10] For us "the decent obscurity of a learned language" means Latin; for the Romans it meant Greek.

BUT THERE WERE recognised exceptions. In certain religious rites obscenity was of the

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[9] In Petronius' *Satyricon* (132), Eumolpus addresses his penis, though as something unmentionable in any respectable context. Later he repents of having bandied words with a part of the body whose very existence men of stricter temper hardly admit.

[10] One was "*Honorem Kalendis Martiis*" ("with due respect for March 1"). March 1 was the feast of Matronalia, a day on which prudery would be particularly appropriate. Others were "*honorem praefari*", *honos auribus sit*", and "*sit venia verbo*."

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essence. Thus at Lanuvium near Rome a whole month was dedicated to the Liberalia, the festival of the Italian equivalent of Bacchus. During it, citizens used the most disgraceful language, until finally the phallic symbol was carried round the market-place, wreathed by a matron, and put back in its repository. As to the language, this is the counterpart of the Athenian Thesmophoria. Again, in one of the old Roman marriage ceremonies there was a point at which obscene ribaldry was traditional—"Fescennine joking", it was called. In the otherwise exquisitely delicate prothalamium which Catullus composed for Manlius and Vinia this is represented by twitting the bridegroom with having a male concubine he will now have to give up. Here the obscenity was again no doubt originally aimed at the magical promotion of fertility; whereas in the ribald verses chanted by Roman soldiers at triumphs its original object may have been apotropaic, the warding off of envy.

Obscenity was also an essential ingredient of certain literary genres, the traditions of which were conscientiously observed. Catullus displays it in his invectives, using particularly shocking words to rebuke two acquaintances whom he represents as having inferred obscenity in his life from the obscenity of his verses. The brutally sadistic language of Horace's eighth and twelfth Epodes is in the tradition of the iambic genre as founded by Archilochus, and the frankness of satire is a legacy from its Roman founder Lucilius.

THE HISTORY OF PERMISSIVENESS in 20th-century Europe and America seems at first sight more parallel to the Roman than the Greek experience.

It is a revolt against the oppressive *mos maiorum*, the artificial restrictions and hypocrisies, of the 19th century. But it is also a crusade for freedom, for originality, for widening the bounds of spiritual experience, whose ultimate source is the French Revolution and the Romantic Movement, the generators of ideas such as those of Shelley and Godwin. In this it has more in common with the Greek movement that originated in Socrates' re-examination of accepted values and was carried to extremes by his avowed followers the Cynics, with their flouting of all conventions.

We see today the same mixture of libertarian propaganda and shocking for shocking's sake as characterised the Cynic behaviour and their diatribes or popular sermons. With us it is, still more, a form of (or substitute for) originality in the arts and literature. Of this whole movement nudism, whether in deed or word, is just one symptom.

Sleeper in a Valley

Couched in a hollow, where a humming stream
Hooks, absently, sun-fragments, silver-white,
And from the proud hill-top, beam falls on beam
Laving the valley in a foam of light,

A soldier sleeps, lips parted, bare his head,
His young neck pillowed where blue cresses drown;
He sprawls under a cloud, his truckle-bed
A spread of grass where the gold sky drips down.

His feet drift among reeds. He sleeps alone,
Smiling the pale smile that sick children wear.
Earth, nurse him fiercely! He is cold as stone,
And stilled his senses to the flowering air.

Hand on his breast, awash in the sun's tide
Calmly he sleeps; two red holes in his side.

Charles Causley
translated from the French of Arthur Rimbaud

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Robert Conquest

The Role of the Intellectual

in International misunderstanding

IT WILL NOT be my concern to retail particular scandals in the intellectual and academic involvement in foreign affairs. I am not compiling a *sottisier* of idiotic remarks made by particular professors, which would indeed be a cruel, but all too easy pastime, under George Orwell's dictum: "You have to be a member of the intelligentsia to believe things like that—no ordinary man could be such a fool. . . . " I seek, rather, to trace the fundamental attitudes which, on the whole, lead intellectuals, and academics in particular, to misinterpret the world scene. This is not, of course, to censure all who have ever served in universities, but merely to indicate generally disqualifying elements in the intellectual-academic approach, or rather temperament, which are responsible for much that is unreal in accepted thinking about international matters.

First, the academic is afflicted, like all of us, with the problem of making the effort of the intellect and the imagination not to project his or our ideas of common sense or natural motivation on to the products of totally different cultures. If it is worse, usually, in the case of the intellectual, that is partly because he systematises the error more strongly, partly because he has also devised means of misunderstanding his *own* culture. The citizenry as such (unless misled) often nourish fairly sound attitudes based on instinct or memory. Inadequacy in understanding the real world is most marked among educated people, including many of those who consider themselves exceptionally qualified to discuss or write of foreign politics.

The crux of the international scene today is a relationship between different political cultures, the histories, attitudes, and beliefs of each of which are radically alien to those of the other. As early as 1946, T. S. Eliot wrote in an extraordinarily perceptive essay introducing *The Dark Side of the Moon*:

> "We are, in fact, in a period of conflict between cultures—a conflict which finds the older cultures in a position of disadvantage: from lack of confidence in themselves, from divisions both internal and between each other, from the inheritance of old abuses from the past aggravated by abuses due to the hasty introduction of novelties. The Liberal . . . assumes . . . that the cultural conflict is one which can, like political conflict, be adjusted by compromise, or, like the religious conflict, be resolved by tolerance. . . . The frantic attempt, either through assembling representatives of more and more nations in public, or through discussions between leaders of fewer and fewer nations in private, to find a political solution to what is not merely a political problem, can . . . only lead to temporary and illusory benefits, unless the deeper problem is faced and pondered."

The present world is, moreover, extraordinary in containing, in the extreme and sensitive contiguity produced by modern arms and modern communication, these states and political cultures of such fundamentally divergent types.

In his Nobel Prize speech, Alexander Solzhenitsyn noted in one of his most penetrating insights, that in the old days disparate cultures were physically separated. Men were "guided by their own experiences in their circumscribed localities, in their community, in their society, and lastly, on their national territory. Then it was still possible for a single pair of eyes to perceive and accept some common scale of values." The differences between distant cultures were only known by report and to a few travellers; and they were so overt and extravagant at the most apparent level that they did not invite any insular judgment. Padishah or Peacock Throne were instantly recognisable as alien. Secretary-

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General or Trade Union Congress sound like the titles and institutions, with their associated attitudes, of the Western world. Nowadays, Solzhenitsyn points out, mankind has become "united", not in the old natural way of communities, but simply in a crude physical sense, with instant communication all over the planet of all superficial information, while at the same time "people in various places apply their own tried and tested scale of values to events, and insist self-confidently and stubbornly on judging only by their own scale."

MY CENTRAL POINT is not so much that people misunderstand other people, or that cultures misunderstand other cultures, but that they do not realise this to be the case. They assume that the light of their own parochial common sense is enough. And they frame policies based on illusions. Yet, how profound is this difference between political cultures and between the motivations of different political traditions; and how deep-set and how persistent these attitudes are!

The contrast between the Soviet despotic culture and the Western civic culture is the current crux, but it needs to be seen on a world historical perspective. Political Man in different systems is not just basically the same creature holding different theoretical opinions, but rather a life-form which has evolved into radically different phyla, each with deep-set attitudes, historically determined over long periods (and subject to natural selection as between different temperamental groups). So that, for example, the present Marxist-Leninist ruling elements in the USSR are actually unable to see the world under categories different from their own. They are the product of a political culture, and nourish a political psychology, quite different from our own. They—and their motivations and probable actions—are not to be understood by projecting on to them our own notions of natural behaviour. The centuries-old tradition of post-Mongol Russia produced a system of unlimited despotism, with a tendency to universal expansionism. This was somewhat modified by two generations of Europeanisation after 1860. But this Western tendency was destroyed by the Revolution which, moreover, grafted on to the old despotic tradition a newer messianic revolutionary despotism with explicit pretence to world rule.

CULTURES HAVE HAD, as they still have, enormous intrinsic momentum, and they cannot be rapidly turned in new directions. Just as the roots of Russian political attitudes derive from the time of the Mongol invasion, the Western civic culture is to be traced back, in spite of vast changes, to "tribal" times. In these "civic" cultures the polity is articulated and decisions are made in accord (in principle at least) with a balance of interests, through consultation with and acceptance by various sections of the community, while in the "despotic" cultures the decisions are taken by a single man or a single group and the population is merely a passive element.

This is not the only way to look at the development of society. But from the point of view of the most substantial and dangerous differences between current forms of polity, it is the crucial one.

THIS APPROACH INVOLVES treating the matter in a rather different light than has been usual. For example, the "civic" culture, though containing the possibility of democracy, is not necessarily "democratic." And though containing the potentiality of the "open society", it is not in itself or necessarily so definable.

The despotic type of culture divides naturally into two general types. First, the traditional "imperial" system in which it is assumed that the true form of the state has already been achieved; and, secondly, the messianic revolutionary type which seeks by an act of will to bring history to an eschatologically predetermined conclusion. The history of the latter tradition expressed itself at different periods in the most highly regarded terminology of the time—as Theology in the 16th Century, as Reason in the 18th, and as Science in the 19th and the 20th, each being in fact a closed and false "scientism"—but each appealing, in turn, to the intellectual of the time.

The present situation is, of course, "unique", like all previous situations; and the particular polities now existing equally have their own singular and specific characteristics. Nevertheless, there is nothing novel about the existence of a civic culture in some countries and a despotic one in others; nor, among the latter, of the temporary emergence of political orders claiming the "Messianic" power to bring history to its Final End. Present ones may seem novel to us, but only because they have not, in the immediately preceding epoch, played much of a role on the world scene; and also because the present-day language of political eschatology is couched in terms which, on the surface, seem to be assimilated to certain political dialects of the established civic cultures, and even—by a logical confusion—to constitute no more than an extreme and total case of ideas operating normally in the civic order.

It is not easy to get into another man's skin,

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let alone that of another culture. The great Condé once remarked (to Cardinal de Retz), about historians, that the reason they got things wrong was,

> *"Ces coquins nous font parler et agir comme ils auroient fait eux-mêmes à notre place."*

He noted, in fact, that academics of his own culture could not, or at any rate had not, made the effort adequately. When it comes to alien cultures, the immodesty of anthropologists and social historians who believe that they have got into the essence of a society is a constant trap. The poet Louis MacNeice, who was also a Professor of Greek and deeply versed in ancient Athens, could nevertheless write:

> *And how one can imagine oneself among them*
> *I do not know.*
> *It was all so unimaginably different,*
> *And all so long ago.*

And this is Athens! Incomparably closer to us in many ways than most of the other ancient cultures, and many modern ones.

AND YET THE EFFORT must be made. And when it comes to modern alien cultures, no understanding (and so no policy) will be worth anything until academics, statesmen, and all others concerned make that effort, to the degree that unreal assumptions are driven even from their almost unconscious first thoughts on affairs. After that, they need, it may be suggested, to master the idea that these deep-set forces of motivation are not merely very strange to us, but cannot easily be changed by argument or manipulation. Macaulay writes of the French Revolution that "had six generations of Englishmen passed away without a single session of Parliament" then we too would have needed years of blood and confusion "to learn the very rudiments of political science," and been equally duped by childish theories, and have equally "sought refuge from anarchy in despotism, and been again driven from despotism into anarchy." Six generations—even though France had by no means become totally uncivic, and had started not too far from the English style—were needed to produce this measure of de-civicisation. Even Marx talks of fifty years being necessary to teach his "proletariat" to rule, while the Maoists have spoken in terms of a hundred or two hundred years as the time required to change social attitudes in a truly radical way. At any rate, we must avoid being too sanguine about the early blossoming of new cultural styles in areas where history has rooted others.

IN ALL REALISM, meanwhile, we must note that the actual state of Western academic and political attitudes on such issues is by no means satisfactory. In particular, we may find that the current tendencies, excessive by all previous civic standards, to use the power of the Western executive arm in vast fields of internal affairs previously controlled by the communities, or guided rather than controlled, has imported into the Western political thought and action attitudes which dispose its formulators to think—wrongly—that the revolutionary polities are doing the same sort of thing. It would not be the first time that a sort of bureaucratic sympathy has determined attitudes. Lord Acton's controversy with Archbishop Creighton—with the Catholic historian attacking, and the Anglican defending the atrocities of the early Popes—is convincingly attributed by Lytton Strachey to Creighton's instinctive sympathy with administrators dealing with refractory problems (with the stake and the rack rather appearing as side issues).

In a somewhat different vein, academics in the West, particularly to the extent they are cut off from "real" politics, are more than ordinarily inclined to systematising in concept, and "planning" in policy, beyond what the subject will bear. This, too, leads to a tendency to see in totalist schemes just a variety of systematic politics.

And, of course, these ideas are not confined to the intellectual world, but seep down, in even more debased form, to a larger audience. Serious-minded housewives by the millions absorb masses of horror-sociology put out by Parrot Paperbacks.

The Etatist Fallacy

ONE SORT OF POLITICAL ACADEMIC sees "problems", works out "solutions", and then turns to an agency for putting them into effect: the state. The idea that there are any limitations in principle to what the state, properly empowered, can do seems to evaporate. Yet this is to venture into action which time and again—and not necessarily through any malice—has brought the civic society into danger. Moreover, while to effect changes that go with the grain of a culture is comparatively easy, to the intellectual one abstract change is as good as another, and depends solely on its formal advantages.

In its most important aspect, the civic order is that which has created a strong state while still maintaining the principle of consensus which existed in primitive society.

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There is a hierachy of types among the social animals. Lowest come the colonial invertebrates, such as the corals, in which polyp buds off from polyp, remaining connected by filaments of tissue, with each polyp serving in various specialised functions, such as tentacles or stomachs, almost as if forming a single animal, but with no individual sphere of action at all. The social insects are not physically connected, but are linked by communication—mainly odours—and have very limited individual flexibility, though the individual can survive for a time in isolation. The social animals, like baboons, have far more individuality, recognise each other as individuals, and can play a variety of roles, sometimes in rotation. Human beings go further still in the same direction, in various obvious ways.

One may similarly note the hierarchy of human societies, in which the lowest give the least scope to individual action, the least variation in attitudes, and the narrowest limits to opinion.

For let me insist that the *Civic* order is of a higher and more developed type than the *Despotic*, and that the carrying through of the older adjustments into the higher form of state organisation is a remarkable feat, a continual and fruitful dialectic of the tendencies of state power and the interests and rights of individuals and groups. It has only been achieved by the Western-type culture. And the tradition has been maintained continually, with occasional lurches and recoveries, through Anglo-Saxon times right back, presumably, to the prehistoric originals.

The Germanic nations which came to Britain had various political customs. The Angles had had kings for several centuries but the Saxons did not. All the Saxon "townships" had their own rulers, and general meetings were held once a year

> "where the leaders met with twelve nobles and as many freedmen and bondmen from each township. There they confirmed the laws, judged important legal cases, and agreed upon the plans that would guide them in peace or war during the coming year. . . ."[1]

The piece-meal movement of the Mercian occupation, the comparatively peaceful incorporation of British populations, provided much flexibility. Settlements varied from military colonies—mainly directed against the Northumberlands—to groups of individuals, groups following chieftains, individual farms; and the same is true, to a lesser degree, of other parts of England.

THE EFFECT ON THE American political culture of the special circumstances of the Frontier has, of course, been much discussed since the end of the last century. The idea of the determining effect of small Western communities owing a general allegiance to government on the East coast, but beyond its effective protection and compelled to rely on their own common initiative, clearly has much to be said for it in accounting for the special circumstances of American democracy. It is interesting to reflect that this was in a sense a re-enactment of the original spread of the English settlers in Britain. That, too, was on the whole, piece-meal. It was only after considerable areas had been settled for some time that they "sent for kings" to the Continent—which is to say, under the circumstances, organised themselves into States.

In both the English and the American cases, it was not, of course, a matter of traditionless man evolving broad new administrative forms to suit the circumstances. Both Americans and Saxons built their new communities on the basis of the traditional laws and rights as they remembered them. In England from that time on, as a historian of the period has put it,

> "From Pagan and Mercian times onward, custom has expected that men of suitable standing should be heard before decision is reached; society has frequently disagreed about which men should be heard when, but when it has reached agreement, governments that ignored agreed opinion have been denied obedience and revenue."[2]

Local tenures and local institutions "trained English society to respect governments that coordinate and to discipline governments that rule by command."

THESE ATTITUDES MAINTAINED the flexibility of our society, with an easier movement of ideas and smoother social change than was possible in most of Europe. Above all, it became possible to correct a powerful central government, which was still obliged to observe the restraints of custom. "Time and effort shaped a tradition of firm leadership and light rule."

Generally speaking, great and successful rulers in England have been those (like Edward I and Edward III) who worked within the laws and customs, sought cooperation rather than sub-

[1] "Hucbald. Vita LeGuini", in *Monumenta Germaniae Historia: Scriptores* (ed. Pertz and Mommsen, Hannover-Berlin, 1826).

[2] John Morris, *The Age of Arthur* (1973), p. 504.

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mission from the representatives of the cities and counties. In turn, from the Magna Carta on, the community rarely called into question the essential powers of the executive—though particular Kings might be, and were, removed. These were those who sought to extend the power of the state at the expense of the community (as under John, Edward II, Richard III, and James II). And the balance in each case was restored by a constitutionalist counter-revolution.

For the civic tradition of Britain has fairly often in the past been faced by more dynamic, more modern, "waves of the future." In Yorkist times, the attempt was made to install in England a streamlined, Renaissance-style despotism (complete with the torture and treachery of the Sforzas and the Borgias). In Stuart times came the attempt to turn England into one of the new Divine Right monarchies on the French model, again to the accompaniment of illegality and torture.

The point is that an executive can be strong without being intrusive into areas in which the community, or a large part of it, resents its presence. This is the key distinction to be made between Elizabeth I and her successors. To say that the Tudor state was as dominant as that of the Stuarts is to miss the essential. Generally speaking it did not—and the Stuarts did—try to impose itself in areas of life (including the economic) which the community thought inappropriate. The state monopolies of James I's time may remind us strongly of similar state operations in Britain in the past generation. This is true even to the extent of the appointment to leading positions in them (accompanied by peerages) of prominent adherents of the executive power.

FOR THE CENTRALISING ELEMENT, always necessary, has lately again shown signs of escaping from popular judgment. Perhaps this is seen less when it comes to major matters than in a tendency to override interests in favour of overall economic or other efficiency. This is an old story, and certainly represents or includes one of the great social problems of the forthcoming period. What is clear, at any rate, is that it is only within the Western order that there is any prospect of the administrators and centralisers being criticised and controlled. All notion that this can be done in some other fashion—i.e. by a "revolutionary dictatorship"—is a leap from a mildly uncomfortable frying pan into a particularly hot type of fire.

Nevertheless the "sovereignty of Parliament", itself in practice tending to mean the sovereignty of the Prime Minister exerted through his "Whips", has been taken to dogmatic extremes, with Parliament being made to take action in spheres in which no doubt it is theoretically competent, but which in practice is destructive of civic society. The famous resolution of 1780 that the powers of the executive "have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished" is once again applicable. For, as Dr Thomas Sowell recently put it (in the *New York Times Magazine*):

> "The grand delusion of contemporary liberals [I would say of contemporary étatistes in general] is that they have both the right and the ability to move their fellow creatures around like blocks of wood—and that the end results will be no different than if people had voluntarily chosen the same actions."

It does not seem so far-fetched to suggest that this trend to excessive centralisation involves some trace of fellow-feeling with—and hence amiable illusions about—the despotic cultures proper; just as the Stuart phase of executive usurpation went with a certain rallying to Bourbon tyranny on the Continent. At least *some* feeling of Burintern solidarity seems to play a certain role in recent academic tendencies to underrate the profound and principled hostility of the Communist culture to our own.

Thus we get the "liberal" idea that there is nothing wrong with executive solutions to every sort of social and even moral problem; and hence that the revolutionary is really just a sort of rather impatient liberal—a fatal romanticising of what Richard Henry Lee defines as "the fickle and the ardent, the right instruments for despotism." It would be a very sanguine topologist who would welcome Alexander the Great as a fellow-professional on the grounds of his having solved the problem of the Gordian knot.

The Systematisation Fallacy

THE KEY WORD in modern studies of politics is "model." With its overtones of something that works in the same way as its original, e.g. a model steam-engine, it is highly inappropriate. A modest and realistic word like "sketch" would be more suitable, in not giving the impression that the model-maker has, at least in essentials, mastered the workings of his original. He never has. Polities are *sui generis*. And though they may be conveniently treated under general categories for many purposes, the description of the elements involved must not be pressed beyond what is possible and appropriate, in this or in any other field where rigour is impossible.

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The contrary tradition of Aristotle, which normally proceeds from the actual state of affairs, seems preferable.

> "In studying this subject we must be content if we attain as high a degree of certainty as the matter of it admits. . . . Such being the nature of our subject and such our way of arguing in our discussions of it, we must be satisfied with a rough outline of the truth, and for the same reason we must be content with broad conclusions."

The open society is in fact the actual result of the absence of a belief in rigorous political science. As the late Nicola Chiaromonte once put it, it is the most perverse of all modern ideas—though similar notions go back a long way—that "the course of things must have a single meaning . . . or that events can be contained in a single system." Judgments in political matters may be made in simple terms and be none the worse for that. Churchill understood the Nazis better than Chamberlain did, not because he had a vast apparatus of "political science" verbosity to analyse it, but because he had some knowledge of history, and of evil. I remember after the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956 the TV interview with Professor Peter Wiles, who had chanced to be in Budapest at the time. Asked what, in his view, were the causes of that revolution, he answered simply: "They were fed up with telling lies."

Bismarck once told the Prussian Chamber: "*Die Politik ist keine exakte Wissenschaft.*" It was only at about this time in the 1860s that such a remark was evidently beginning to be necessary. German academics who had, as they thought, systematised most other fields of knowledge, were now treating history and politics as though these too could be brought within a set of formulae, developing a tradition which had only recently become dominant, though going back to such aberrations, two hundred years previously, as Leibnitz's extraordinary "mathematical proof" that the Count Palatine of Neuburg must win the Polish throne (*Specimen demonstrationum politicarum pro eligendo rege Polonorum*, 1664).

It has been one of the marks of our time that the prestige of the physical and other genuine sciences has been so great that other studies have wished to share it. Unfortunately, it is not as easy to introduce the scientific rigours into areas from which the information is as yet greatly insufficient for such structures. As a result, in psychology, sociology, linguistics, literary criticism, etc., inflated theorisings have been treated as though they were established doctrine. The position is roughly that of phrenology in the last century. A complicated (and, on the face of it, sophisticated) methodology was used to study phenomena which appeared to be directly related to the subject, but from which in practice absolutely no useful information could really be extracted. Physiognomy was also developed as a "science" by Lavater. Norman Douglas in his *Siren Land* effectively ridicules the attempts by its practitioners to deduce many contradictory characteristics from a bust of Tiberius—which as it happened was probably not of the Emperor Tiberius at all.

YET THE ACADEMIC MIND cannot be kept from premature theory. Behaviourism, Systems Analysis—and no doubt soon Catastrophe Theory—arise elsewhere and are applied one by one to politics.

The word "system" is so general that it can be used in any field from nuclear weaponry to elementary education, and thus leads to the assumption that the ideas of design, engineering, and analysis suitable to the one can be applied to the other. As Dr Ida Hoos has commented,

> "In the real world there appears to be about as much justification for committing society's sundry malfunctioning systems to the care of a systems analyst whose sole claim to expertise is technical as to call a hydraulic engineer to cure an ailing heart because his speciality is pumping systems. Although the term 'system' can be applied to both space hardware and social problems, the inputs are vastly different, as are the controls and objectives. In the engineered system, the components are tangible, the variables controlled, and the outputs identifiable. In the social sphere, the crucial elements often defy definition and control and do not behave according to a set of rules. There is no quality control of a social system; the test of its effectiveness is to a large extent a reflection of values and it is certainly not amenable to mathematical measurement. . . ."

Resemblances of form rather than of intent or actual activity tend to mislead. A wolf has a very close resemblance, physiologically speaking, to a basset hound. Its reaction to a pat on the head, however, is different. A death camp is "structured", both physically and operationally, very much like a holiday camp. Two identically structured cars may present different dangers if one is driven by an alcoholic psychopath. The Roman Empire had the same structure under Nero and under Vespasian, under Gallienus and under Aurelian.

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The same objection applies to all premature systematising. The success of conceptual and mathematical rigour in the fields in which it can be applied—for example, in the engineering triumphs which go into the Apollo spacecraft—must be distinguished severely from the failure in areas where an alleged scientific or rigorous system has been applied, but where the rigour is in fact inapplicable. The failure of scientific sociologists in putting vast sums of money into Poverty Programmes, which have not done anything to alleviate poverty (except to some degree among the bureaucracy), is matched by the failure of Robert McNamara's military academics with their computerised science of war, its escalations and responses.

AND THIS DISASTER, in 1966, was little more than a repeat of 1916, when the entire Western European culture was severely shaken, if not nearly destroyed. The major villain then was Field Marshal von Falkenhayn, the "most scientific" general who ever ruined his country, as Liddell Hart significantly remarked, who put into effect a calculated method of winning the war for Germany. The arts of strategy were forgotten, the uncertainties of the battlefield dismissed. The French Army was to be destroyed not even by attempting a breakthrough, but by attacking a position which the French must defend at all costs and where they would "bleed to death" whether the objective—Verdun—was captured or not. This was to be done simply by a scientific concentration of weaponry which could not be matched within the narrow French salient. The result was the great 10-month battle of 1916 with its 700,000 dead or missing on a 10-mile front. It is true that the French Army was never the same again, but nor was the German. The only net German gain for one-third of a million dead was "the acquisition of a piece of raddled land little larger in area than the combined Royal Parks in London. . . ."

Generally speaking, attempts by the new schools of political sciences to introduce "rigour" into the subject are comparably fallacious, and hence dangerous if taken seriously (and if not, a notable waste of money). An attempt is reported to analyse problems of international *détente* by feeding 1200 factors into a computer. Such readily numericised factors do not exist. At best, there are numbers of infinite variables and of unknowns.

THE NOTION that everything can be reduced to mathematical manipulation is in any case basically mistaken. We do not even have a general mathematical solution to the *three-body* problem, which can only be solved by progressive approximation. Again, as we all know, it has long since been proved by Gödel that some problems are in principle insoluble, mathematically speaking. But more generally, we should consider the fact that it is impossible to design a computer that could cover all the potentialities of a chess game. For it can be shown that such a computer would need more units than there can be particles in the entire universe. And chess has rules in the sense that international politics does not.

In all areas of historical and anthropological investigation genuine scholars have progressively abandoned theories of linear development and the older attempts to attain generality by the selection and inflation of often superficial similarities as "essential." On the other hand, at a certain theoretical level worthless generalisation is still rampant—nowhere more than in "political science." It is for the most part evident to serious students that (except in a very short-range sense) predictability in the political and social field is both in principle and in practice unattainable, at any rate by the weak and fallible general theories at present in existence. The urge to premature and inadequately supported generality is—far from being a higher development—a sure sign of primitivism.

In so far as they retain the element of intellectual rigour which makes them liable to refutation on empirical and evidential grounds, they are invariably so refuted. In so far as they are irrefutable, it is precisely because they are so general and flexible as to convey no real information. In that case, why do they emerge? We are plainly in the presence not of an intellectual but of a psychological phenomenon.

How did the contrary delusion which so frequently falsifies views of our politics, and those of international politics, ever arise? It is, at any rate, an astonishing tribute to the power and persistence of the desire for tidiness and certitude.

The Rationality Fallacy

CRITICAL THOUGHT on politics, beginning with the pre-Socratics, provides another contrast between our society and the despotisms, and at the same time another way for the academic to go wrong.

The Western type of society, just as it managed to create a strong state without destroying the consensual, managed to contain the critical attitude without destroying the older, less "rational" loyalties. In this it was invariably, though naturally, hampered by minds devoted to the attempt to conceptualise, rationalise, and verbalise everything—that is, generally speaking, academics and members of early-teenage debating societies, right from the time of the sophists and

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their pupils. These envisaged the post-critical society as one in which every view or decision is the product of pure reason, with the old half-conscious bonds and myths uniting that society treated as null and negligible. But in fact the bonds of social order did not become a hundred per cent conscious, nor could they, any more than the development by the human animal of the consciousness or self-awareness by which he distinguishes himself from other species in any way eliminated the personal unconscious.

Political civilisation subsists both at a rational level, and at a depth beyond present—perhaps any—analysis, as with all the unsterile human attitudes: as with successful art appealing (as A. E. Housman puts it) "to something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire. . . ."

For political civilisation consists of attachment to (or rather a less conscious rooting in) the tradition of generations. It is a libertarian attitude, and a modern one in that it is open to the seeking of undogmatic solutions to unforeseen problems. But it is a modern style which has not (or not yet) deprived itself of the barbarous strength of the ancient loyalties, and which cannot survive if it does. As Orwell said, in World War II (in his "Wells, Hitler and the World State"):

> "What has kept England on its feet during the past year? In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English left-wing intellectuals has been to break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded, we might be watching the *S.S.* men patrolling the London streets at this moment."

The post-critical political culture, except to some degree and in certain areas and periods, has contrived since it emerged to preserve the unconscious or "myth" basis of the state while exercising the critical faculty in politics. The emergence of the mind did not lead to the disappearance of the heart. The patriotism of the West is not, moreover, solely a tribal solidarity; it is a feeling not only for the "nation", but also for the order. Men who do not deny their past are wiser than men who do or who try to. As Burke points out (in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*), in the English Petition of Right:

> "The parliament says to the king, 'Your subjects have *inherited* this freedom', claiming their franchises not on abstract principles 'as the rights of men', but as the rights of Englishmen, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers."

Nor were Selden and the other learned men who drew up the Petition ignorant of the many general theories then already current about "the rights of men." They simply preferred to ground themselves soundly upon experience, rather than enter the vague and wild territory of speculation. Something of the sort could be said about the American Founding Fathers. Arthur Schlesinger (Sr.) remarks of them that they were "men of vision without being visionaries"; Carl Bridenbaugh that they were "men of intellect, not intellectuals."

IN THE LONG RUN, our own political culture depends less on the conscious will of our statesmen and citizens, or even on the political institutions which have been found to provide a suitable mechanism than on the whole drift, tradition and habit, unconscious as much as conscious, unformulated as much as legislated. Or as Aristotle noted (in the *Politics*):

> "There are plenty of instances of a constitution which according to its law is not democratic, but which owing to custom and way of upbringing is democratic in its workings; there are likewise others which according to law incline towards democracy, but by reason of custom and upbringing operate more like oligarchies."

And, of course, one does not transcend one's culture, one simply deserts it. Patriotism is, as Orwell remarked, for better or for worse. Stephen Decatur's famous formulation (now frequently given in a later and somewhat perverted form):

> "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country right or wrong."

does not state a general abstract principle, but only asserts that in a society of the Western democratic type involvement is inextricable. Those who go outside it are not in fact judging from a superior position. They have merely cut their roots. And the conclusions at which they arrive are not purely rational and moral: they represent, rather, the rationalisation either of active hostility to the soil that has nourished them, or, less disreputably though more sillily, of the childish hope for short cuts to perfection, the provision by magic of peace, or plenty, or justice. In any case intellectuals delude themselves

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when they think that they can detach themselves from these feelings, can stand above such things and judge from the point of view of abstract principles. Orwell pointed out that they quickly became attached simply to another, and hostile, "nationalism", by which he meant allegiance to some different principle. There have been many attacks on the Loyalty oaths required in the late 1940s and early '50s in some American schools and universities; and, indeed, there is much to be said against them. All the same, one may feel that they are slightly preferable to the Disloyalty oaths in effect required in the late 1960s and early '70s, when a professor charged with serving his own government—Walt Rostow, for example—could be blacklisted for the crime.

STEPHEN DECATUR'S FORMULATION, it will be noted, is totally unlike the nationalism we are accustomed to from the States in which it is associated with ideological fanaticism. With them, the mere possibility of being "wrong" does not arise: their "right" is actually *defined* in terms of their own allegiance.

And here we should note a "contradiction" in the modern Messianic Despotisms. Their movements were, in an important sense, the product of critical rather than the pre-critical attitudes. Yet they are now in the position of having to restore the pre-critical attitude as far as their own ideas and organisation are concerned. The dust must be swept back under the carpet, the djinn restored to its bottle. But this is a staggeringly difficult task, both conceptually and administratively. Conceptually it can only be done by extravagant "doublethink", highly deleterious to the minds undergoing it; and organisationally it requires an unprecedented exercise of force, far more than was ever needed by traditionalist despotism. It seems to be partly for this reason that the new-style rule, needing every possible source of psychological support, turns to the older traditions of imperial despotism.

The Cultural Malleability Fallacy

ORWELL REMARKS on the "mental coarseness" of revolutionaries, who "imagine that everything can be put right by altering the shape of society."

In the despotisms, of whatever style, politics properly speaking can hardly be said to exist. There are the skills of intrigue among a narrow group of those closest to the instruments of power; but, though on a more impressive stage, these are exercised within limits which, in the civic society, would be appropriate to a parish council. There are skills of administration which may, indeed, be very highly developed. But these again, though necessary in any state, do not themselves constitute the substance of politics. Real politics is an immensely untidy art, and dependent more on the habits of a culture and the experience of centuries than on any political science, or concepts worked out in the abstract in studies or reading rooms.

The first true studies of politics, in particular that of Aristotle, were already historical. That is, they were (or the best of them were) not abstract speculations but based rather on several generations of experience in a score of real political units. It is surely no accident that both the greatest writers on politics (the other being Machiavelli) had experience of, or immediate access to, a large number of variously ruled states. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that a modern professor, separated by thousands of miles from any but the most indirect and misinterpreted notions of other types of polity, should come to shallow conclusions.

A delusion common even in the West, at least among academics, is that all "social" problems are in principle susceptible of being solved by political decision. It is this error which has led many backward countries further and further into the grip of incompetent terrorists. Each time a solution imposed by force has, after all, failed to improve matters it is thought that the fault is merely that insufficient power has been put behind it. If one more refractory social group is liquidated, if party discipline is tightened and all shirkers and compromisers adequately dealt with, then next time all will be well. We should have learned by now from these unfortunate "social experiments" that there are problems which cannot be dealt with even by the maximum application of political power.

But even genuine social improvements may be unacceptable if imposed by force. Frau Heydrich has told us[3] that her husband "introduced higher education and health insurance and raised the standard of living" and that the British had him killed because he was, in this way, winning over the Czechs. Not dissimilar errors are being made today.

As Burke notes in a famous passage, the great fault of every sort of arbitrary rule is the superficiality of imagining that political and similar difficulties can be disposed of by main force. This is, he points out, laziness and evasion.

> "The[a]micable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations.

[3] *Sunday Express*, 8 August 1965.

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> It will not suffer us to be superficial. It is the want of nerves of understanding for such a task, it is the degenerate fondness for tricking short-cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in so many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them defects in wisdom are to be supplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of slothful men. The difficulties, which they rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious and insecure."

REVOLUTIONARY STATES have in no cases succeeded in transforming their cultures so much that they can relax the pressures. The situation is particularly unlike that foreseen by Marx who held that the revolutionary state, though a dictatorship of the proletariat (a phrase by which he did not in any case imply the rule of a minority machine), would start to "wither away" immediately. In all the revolutionary countries, the current structure of society can only be maintained by the constant pressure of the administrative organs holding everything in a state of special strain. They are left regarding as the central moral principle the mere protection of their own rule. By definition this is the ideal system, no longer requiring objective justification—or only perfunctorily—as with the legitimists of the declining period of the European monarchies.

Sanguine attitudes to "Revolution" have existed mainly among comfortably situated intellectuals who resent their own societies, but suffer little from them. The modern Liberal, rejoicing in the scandals about the Establishment, may remind one of the shock given to the old régime in France by the affair of the Cardinal's Necklace. Fréteau de Saint-Just, quite typically, of course exulted:

> "What a triumph for Liberal ideas! A Cardinal a thief! The Queen implicated! Mud on the crosier and the sceptre! . . ."

He was himself, equally of course, to go to the guillotine before ten years were up.

For as Camus points out, "none of the evils which totalitarianism claims to remedy is . . . worse than totalitarianism itself." He might have added that, on the record, it does not even remedy those evils against which it particularly declaims—except, sometimes, in a purely superficial sense. That is, it may cure unemployment, as in Russia in the 1930s. But it is less unemployment as such than the hunger and misery it causes which is the objection to it; and the Russians substituted for the temporary mass unemployment of the West the far greater misery and hunger of the more enduring and more heavily populated labour camp system.

The academic, who is exempt from the temptation of supporting the old-fashioned and openly hierarchic despotisms, is deceived into thinking that he has something in common with the newer style despotism, for two reasons. First, of course, these use similar language. Words like "democracy . . . social change . . . revolutionary structure . . . basic problems . . ." abound in the mutual vocabulary.

But even academics who are not deceived, or not exactly deceived, by this superficial point, are often trapped by what on the face of it is a more substantial affinity. For, as I noted earlier both they and the revolutionary appear to be—in a sense, in fact, are—supporters of compulsory state action *for what appears to be the common good.* Nor is the difference between the two an absolutely clear-cut one, though, as Tocqueville remarked (about the differences between the moderate constitutional monarchies and the more left-wing republics even of his day), the revolutionary régime "promises more but gives less."

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT has noted that for some people government is "an instrument of passion: the art of politics is to inflame and direct desire. . . ." For others, which is to say in general the traditional attitude of those who have a regard for the unity and continuity of a culture, the business of government is something different: "to restrain, to deflate, to pacify, and to reconcile; not to stoke the fires of desire, but to damp them down"; on the grounds that (as he puts it) "the conjunction of dreaming and ruling generates tyranny." For it is a basic principle of true as against despotic politics that it is more important for the civic system as such to be unshaken than for particular measures to be opposed or insisted on to the limit. A democratic community enjoying political liberty is only possible when the attachment of the majority of the citizens to political liberty is stronger than their attachment to specific political doctrines. And this is to say that on many controversial issues a certain comparative apathy must prevail amongst a large part of the population. But apathy cannot appear a virtue to the man who has committed

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himself to an intellectually elaborated scheme or policy.

The Artistic Criterion Fallacy

IT IS NOT ALL THAT RARE to come across people in the West—particularly, perhaps, in academic circles—unable to believe that other cultures can be, in one sense, uncivilised, if they can be shown to produce architecture, opera, ballet, drama, etc. on an impressive scale. Even in relations between States, we find "cultural exchange" sponsored or handled by Westerners who seem to imagine that a political amenity is thereby achieved.

We must distinguish between the various uses of the word "civilisation." As is often pointed out, China has been "civilised" for millennia. That is to say, it long ago achieved a *civil* order. But it never rose to the higher degree of a *civic* order. Cultures may win our admiration for the high development of their administrative order, but political civilisation proper is another matter.

Something similar applies to the erection of great buildings. It used to be believed that the "Old Empire" of the Mayas, in the Peten area, died out owing to a migration to Northern Yucatan, where the "New Empire" then arose. It is true that the great temples and buildings ceased to be used and disappeared under the jungle. But we now realise that the peasant culture which had supported these cults continued as before: they just stopped going in for architecture—just as pyramids petered out in Egypt after the earlier dynasties. Quite highly organised communities may exist without towns. There was nothing that could be called a town in Ireland until the Danes founded Dublin and the other settlements in the 10th century.

Large buildings at least imply a fair-sized and mobilisable work-force. When it comes to the purer arts, no necessary connection between high achievement and an advanced social order exists at all. The paintings in the Altamira caves are as accomplished, as brilliant, as any that have been produced since. Yet there is a reasonable sense in which we may feel that the Stone Age hunters were all the same less "civilised" than at least some of their less brilliant successors on the same continent.

It is another delusion of the generally educated that politicians they approve of are more cultured, or more concerned with culture, than their alternates. But political culture does not run *pari passu* with "culture" in the aesthetic sense. Abraham Lincoln was incomparably more advanced in political civilisation than any Romanov or Habsburg, in spite of all the ballet and opera of St Petersburg and Vienna. Or, if we feel that some special exception should be made for the fans not only of Artemus Ward, but even of the far worse Petroleum V. Nasby, on the grounds that Saginaw County could hardly be expected to produce the culture of the old metropolises, we can retort first, that Lincoln was extremely well read in the political culture; and we can anyhow destroy the dubious and shaky special plea by turning to England and noting that, while the Tsars were at the Bolshoi, British prime ministers (Rosebery, for example) would be at the Derby. And it was Nero, wasn't it, rather than Vespasian, who was so keen on the arts?

MUCH OF THIS attached to the intellectuals' attitude to President John F. Kennedy. They deluded themselves with the idea that he shared their high aesthetic tastes. This does not seem to be so. Perhaps they would overlook, nowadays, his addiction to James Bond. But Arthur Schlesinger (Jr), in his official biography, makes it clear that the President's favourite poem was Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous With Death", a morally admirable, but aesthetically third-rate piece of versification. One can imagine the offended cries which would have gone up if it had been revealed as General Eisenhower's favourite verse. (We are also told that Kennedy could not stand "long hair" music.)

President Kennedy's relations with the intellectuals do him credit. They do not do nearly so much credit to the intellectuals. When it came to the actual crises of foreign policy, in Cuba or Berlin or Viet Nam, he paid no attention to their demands or views. But in a general way, he wished for their support; he obtained it as he would have obtained the support of the Iowa farmers—by having them to dinner and making a few skilful gestures. (It is true, indeed, that the Iowa farmers would have been a little more hardheaded and looked for more tangible returns.) In reality, President Kennedy's intellect operated in other spheres: those proper to a politician. And even had he in fact been a keen fan of William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Abstract Expressionism (though one may doubt if such a taste is compatible with sense in any field, including the political), it is not that which would have marked him as a statesman.

A CURIOUS LITTLE VOLUME might be made of the poems of Stalin, Castro, Mao and Ho Chi Minh, with illustrations by A. Hitler. This last name should remind us that the much touted slogan, "When I hear the word 'culture', I reach for my revolver", was uttered by a fictional member of the *S.A.*, the Nazi radical, egalitarian wing crushed in the blood purge of June 1934. Quite

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the contrary, Hitlerism proper (like Kaiserism) swarmed over Europe to the accompaniment of vast claptrap about *Kultur* and its preservation from Anglo-Saxon and Slavonic hordes. If it comes to that, the first truly "cultured" man in English politics was the revolting Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, translator of Cicero, patron of Humanists, the purity of whose Latin brought tears to the eyes of Aeneas Sylvius himself. But he is known to political history, under different criteria, as the "Butcher Earl", owing to his record as impaler of prisoners and slaughterer of infants—new phenomena in medieval England. We have a horrid example to moderns in the incredible eulogy of him by Caxton after his death as supreme "in science and moral virtue."

It ought, at any rate, to be possible to dismiss from our minds the idea that any necessary correlation, individual or collective, exists between artistic culture and political maturity.

The Temperamental Homogeneity Fallacy

CONDÉ'S REMARK, to the effect that academics were temperamentally unfitted to understand the world of soldiers and statesmen is enough, I hope, to make much professorial blood run cold. It is not even as if Condé himself was an intellectually muscle-bound thug of a professional soldier. Those who delighted to frequent his château when he was in disgrace make almost a roll call of the genius of the age.... But if intellectuals fail to understand the temperaments of the generals of their own culture and find great difficulty in mastering the principles of an alien culture, they are all the more unlikely to grasp the temperaments producing and produced by that opposite tradition.

Political opinion seems largely a matter of temperament. Strikingly enough, this is implicitly admitted by Marx himself in that passage in the *Communist Manifesto* in which, having insisted that in general people act according to their class economic interest, he makes an exception for—Marxist intellectuals!

> "A portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole."

As we know, most Marxist and Communist leaders have been of bourgeois origin. Marx is here admitting that their motivations are not those normally provided for by Marxism. What are they, then? Marx himself would have been the last to say that any of his followers were the intellectual superiors of Darwin or Clark Maxwell, nor is it likely that a Communist in this century would claim that Molotov was the intellectual superior of Ivan Pavlov or Anton Chekhov; or Louis Aragon of Louis de Broglie or Albert Camus. But if not intellect, nor interest, we are left with—temperament.

A major cause for misjudgment is the fact that the messianic totalist uses a rational-sounding political vocabulary—one not far different from that of the "liberal" academic. Not only can discussion, debate, "dialogue" take place; but the feeling is given that here, too, is a rational man with sympathetic aims.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the mistakes due to what would appear to be so simple and easily corrigible a misconception. I know of the daughter of a prominent Eastern European Communist politician who had, at one time, been arrested, tortured and barely escaped execution during the purges which affected his country. This family, as a result, became completely disenchanted with the whole system. When he was released and regained a high position, his daughter imagined that he, too, would have been chastened by his experiences. There was absolutely no sign of this. He was delighted to be back, and full of pleasure at inflicting on his countrymen, and on his former comrades where possible, any form of terror that might prove suitable. The view he seemed to take was that the rules of the game were tough, and he was not in the least surprised that when he was on the losing side, he would suffer by it. The notion that there might be something wrong with the whole system had simply not occurred to him at all; his thinking was limited to "it's my turn now."

W. H. Auden similarly writes (in *Vespers*) of the difference between an "Arcadian" and a "Utopian" temperament.

> "When lights burn late in the Citadel, I (who have never seen the inside of a police station) am shocked and think: 'were the city as free as they say, after sundown all her bureaus would be huge black stones.'
>
> He (who has been beaten up several times) is not shocked at all but thinks: 'one fine night our boys will be working up there.'"

Bernard Shaw's attitude to Revolution was markedly a bloodless rationalism which could only see in Lenin and his subordinates people conducting a reasonable experiment, and he accused Churchill as falsely characterising them as "devils" when they were no more than rational human beings at work. Orwell comments that whether one regards them as angels or devils,

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one thing certain is that they were not *reasonable* men.

A remarkable dramatisation of the results of reasonable men misunderstanding unreasonable men who used the same terminology, is given of the French Revolution. La Harpe, the only eventual survivor, tells a story of a dinner held at the beginning of 1788 at which all the guests were leading intellectuals opposed to Church and State, and longing for the reorganisation of society in the "Revolution" which would bring in "the Rule of Reason." One of those present, Cazotte, an adept of the Illuminati, claimed to have the gift of prophecy. He told them that the Revolution was indeed almost on them. They jokingly asked what would happen to them under the new régime. Condorcet (Cazotte replied) would die in prison of poison he had taken to cheat the executioner.

> "What has that to do with philosophy and the reign of reason?"
>
> "It is just what I told you, it is in the name of philosophy, of humanity, and liberty. It is under the reign of reason that you will come to such an end. . . ."

Chamfort (Cazotte went on) would cut his veins with twenty-two slashes of the razor, but fail to die for some months; Vicq-d'Azyr, on the other hand, would succeed in a similar act. De Nicolai would die on the scaffold; Bailly too; and de Malesherbes, and Roucher. . . .

> "Then we will be subjugated by the Turks and the Tartars?"
>
> "Not at all. . . I have told you: those who will treat you thus will all be philosophers, and will have at every moment on their lips all the same phrases that you have been using for an hour, and will be repeating all your maxims."

By the time six years had passed, every word had been fulfilled, and Cazotte himself had been the hero and victim of one of the most pitiful events of the Revolution.

Where—perhaps in Hampstead or in Princeton—could such a meeting take place today? But then they might be discussing a foreign country rather than their own.

EACH RÉGIME PROJECTS, in a sense, a mesh of the right reticulation which—passed through society—pulls to the surface the politico-psychological type required, and leaves the others unused. It is equally the case that on the breakdown of an order, the atmosphere and events of revolution similarly drag up, with a net of different mesh, a totally different ruling type replacing, within months, the older establishment.

One of the lessons of Nazism, and indeed of the other totalitarianisms, is that a reserve of people suited to the most abhorent and horrible types of state are in existence in potential, and usable when the time comes. However hostile the view that might have been taken of Germany, few would have thought that quite such a criminal revolutionary element as eventually formed the ruling caste existed in its recesses. The same can be said of Hungary's Rakosi regime. Again, in *The Gulag Archipelago*, the moral-psychological type which Stalinism nourished and gave power to, comes through very clearly indeed; not the iron executors of the laws of history, but the bird-brained, sniggering torturers of the *NKVD*, the corrupt and selfish toadies of the apparatus. Djilas tells us that Stalin had only one moral principle: objection to income from property. As far as the state he created is concerned, even that principle was of little account compared with the great driving force of mere self-interest, habit of mind, inability to think at all outside closed formulae. But all were melded in the psychological product, or catch. One can only recognise this phenomenon, at the moral level, in the brutal local operatives of the Jacobins. And Lenin, of course, not only made use of just such characters, but, with his usual clarity, justified the action:

> "Party members should not be measured by the narrow standard of petty bourgeois snobbery. Sometimes a scoundrel is useful to our party, precisely because he is a scoundrel."

A MESSIANIC REVOLUTION is not the product of messianic supermen without earthly contamination who have been sleeping in caves. It uses human material of the country it takes over. And, as I have said, political or general psychology is the product of generations.

In the Russia which the Bolsheviks seized, they could rely on few who could in any real sense be said to have been their followers before the seizure—or the promise of the seizure—of power. As with all other seizures of power it was a matter of the violent, the ambitious, the brutal, the criminal. But nor is this to say that the old underground party itself consisted simply of sea-green incorruptibles. When one thinks of Stalin, Kaganovich, Mekhlis, Yagoda, Shkiryatov, it is clear enough that the qualifications for underground membership did not exclude characters truly revolting by any standards whatever.

To look at it from a different angle and consider the concerns of the progressive intellectual—to determine if the package they form is a unity based on reason or a temperamental matter—let

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me quote the left-wing historian Professor E. J. Hobsbawm, on the causes pursued by the typical progressive figure a hundred years ago: "natural philosophy, phrenology, free thought, spiritualism, temperance, unorthodox medicine, social reform, and the transformation of the family",[4] each supported with just as much righteousness and certainty as the partially different batch, containing a fresh lot of pseudo-sciences, now so much heard of. The point is, clearly, that what comes out of the package is not intellectual coherence, or the pursuit of interests, but a cast of mind.

The revolutionary is typical of a *milieu* with little or no civic culture and thus cut off from all political realities. In a rather different sense, one can see that this also applies to a certain type of Westerner. He is typically a student, or an academic who has never in effect ceased to be a student. His experience has not included the give-and-take of ordinary political and civic life. He has come to utopian or near-utopian attitudes at an age when whatever he may have absorbed from the social ambience is at its weakest—and his tendency to reject it at its greatest—and at a time when his own experience is virtually nil. He also, typically at least, comes from families whose way of life has provided effective cushioning against the rough edges of reality.

As has been shown by analysts of the revolutionary movements of the Middle Ages, the leaders were mainly members of the lower clergy, with a few eccentric scions of the lower nobility, together with obscure laymen who had somehow acquired a clerical education. As Norman Cohn puts it, "a recognisable social stratum—a frustrated and rather low-grade intelligentsia. . . ."[5] (And for their cannon fodder they did not recruit the poor as such, but those of the poor "who could find no assured and recognised place in society at all.") And Cohn, noting all these resemblances to the modern revolutionaries like Nazis and Communists, adds that even in the medieval context, not remarkable for tolerance or objectivity, the millenarians were "abnormal in their destructiveness and irrationality"—psychological points.

A discussion of "temperament" (a word selected for its appropriate lack of precision) as a major crux in politics is hardly popular in political-science circles, partly because it is extremely hard to produce an adequate typology of political temperament, at any rate one better than Plutarch's. Still, one advantage of such an approach is that it enables us to take note of a particular temperament—that of the "intellectual", which is particularly limited and unreal, particularly unable to credit the existence of various temperaments and various cultures, and so particularly likely to lead us into disaster, if heeded

[4] In the *New Statesman* (4 April 1970).

[5] Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (2nd and later editions).

Recluse

Smoking the hours. Fag-ends litter
the tabletop, ash on my shirt
and trousers, on the few books
I still possess, and never read.
It is their smell I've come to love:
the yellowed page I lift to my face
and breathe. Poems, stories, all

long forgotten; but brackish print,
the smoke-scent of a first edition . . .
I close my eyes, and live.
I do not know or care what time it is.
Days fly though me
like grey sea birds through mist
on their way to the sea.

Tony Flynn

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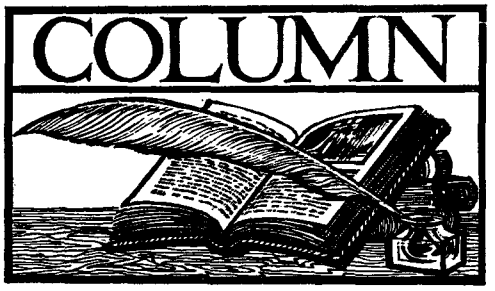

READERS of ENCOUNTER, who have followed the recent controversy in its columns between Mr George Kennan and his critics, may have been tempted to see in it a particularly sharp and vivid reflection of the general confusion and disarray which rule at present in the counsels of the West. Far be it from me to intervene in such a controversy; both Mr Kennan and his critics are far better qualified than I am to discuss the issues which divide them. Yet there are certain aspects of the argument which, as it seems to me, positively invite and provoke comment from one who possesses neither Mr Kennan's immense professional experience of diplomatic and international affairs nor the kind of expert historical knowledge of the Soviet Union which his critics have arrayed against him.

The core of the argument, of course, is what kind of attitude, and what kind of policy, the West, and particularly the United States, should adopt towards the Soviet Union at the present time; and the answer to that question depends implicitly and explicitly on what kind of state the Soviet Union constitutes today. On the one hand, is it a state which, for irresistible historical, political and ideological reasons, is compelled to extend its boundaries and its influence to an extent which represents a mortal threat to anything which we have become accustomed to regard as a free world? Or is it, on the other hand, a state like most other states of which we have knowledge, subject to internal constraints, difficulties, contradictions, which in themselves place limits on whatever expansionist ambitions it may entertain, and therefore it may be possible that at least a precarious balance can be maintained between its interests and those of other states with which it threatens to come into conflict?

I would repeat that on such a question both Mr Kennan and his critics are far better qualified to pronounce than I am: yet they both implicitly demand that all of us should decide for ourselves which is in the right, with consequences which are of incalculable importance for everyone. If Mr Kennan is right, then it is at least possible for the West to maintain a peace with the Soviet Union, however uneasy and unsettled, for as long a period as any contemporary statesman can possibly foresee. If his critics are right, then there is no other policy which the West can rationally attempt but one of permanent and continuous confrontation with the Soviet Union, leading if necessary to armed conflict in limited areas or even, if the issue is pressed to a decision, to the nuclear holocaust which is the nightmare of everyone alive today.

It is a consequence of Mr Kennan's view that, in order to limit the possible areas of conflict with the Soviet Union, the United States should restrict itself to the defence of its own immediate and vital interests, defined in a very narrow sense, though even he would accept that they include the freedom and independence of Western Europe. His critics, on the other hand, contend that the United States carries a burden of responsibility which extends to wherever the Soviet Union threatens to extend its boundaries or its spheres of influence even further, and that the continued existence of a free world, including the existence of the United States itself, depends on whether it accepts and discharges this responsibility.

BETWEEN SUCH POINTS OF VIEW there is very little room for compromise. Perhaps this would not matter if so deep and profound a division of opinion were confined within the limits of polite and academic discussion in the columns of ENCOUNTER. But in fact it presents a choice which, in the present state of affairs, faces the Western world with the necessity of taking urgent and vital decisions. In Africa especially, where we appear to be watching a kind of 20th-century version of the 19th-century race for empire, it is difficult to see how such decisions can be postponed much longer.

Moreover, it is a division of opinion which now seems to have penetrated deep into the ranks of the United States government itself. The recent, and open, disagreements, between President Carter's National Security adviser, Mr Brzezinski, and his Secretary of State, Mr Vance, have given United States policy an appearance of confusion and indecision which in itself is a cause of alarm and dismay to her friends and allies; not to speak of the damage it has done to the prestige and reputation of President Carter himself, both abroad and at home, where there are many who now believe that his apparent vacillation and indecision have themselves become a major contribution to the confusion which at present prevails on the international scene.

Yet perhaps President Carter is right to remain undecided. There are certainly powerful forces, both within and without the United States, and perhaps including his own National Security

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adviser, which would wish him to adopt a stance which could have no other effect than to destroy the possibility of any form of agreement or relaxation of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, and this would apply in the field of arms limitation and control and of efforts to impose some kind of restraint on an international competition in the sale of arms which is already out of hand; and equally in those geographical areas where the United States and her allies come increasingly closer to direct confrontation with the Soviet Union and her satellites.

Such a prospect cannot fail to fill one with profound apprehension, and for that reason it is possible to sympathise with President Carter in his ambiguous and often mutually contradictory declarations. He is faced with the inexorable *Entweder-Oder* of the choice involved in the dialogue between Mr Kennan and his critics, and perhaps even between his own advisers, and it would appear that it may not be possible to postpone the moment of decision much longer.

IT IS NATURAL that President Carter should hesitate, and indeed one should perhaps be grateful to him, when one realises the almost desperate nature of one of the alternatives which is being urged upon him, and indeed the Western world as a whole, from many quarters. For an extreme statement of the case one need look no further than such a book as Mr Brian Crozier's *Strategy for Survival*.[1] Mr Crozier is, after all, Director-General of the Institute for the Study of Conflict, and therefore one has the right to assume that his book is in a sense an authoritative one; that is to say, that it is the product of protracted study and discussion, that the facts on which it depends are reliable and objective, and that they demonstrably lead to the conclusions Mr Crozier has drawn from them.

No doubt the field which Mr Crozier has covered is a vast and complicated one, since it consists of every area, geographical, military, economic, ideological, in which the Soviet Union and the West are likely to come into conflict. It is nothing less than the great globe itself, and Mr Crozier is well aware of its complexities and contradictions, so much so that he has tried to give his book something of the style and simplicity of a military manual, from which everything has been removed which clouds the main objective and nothing remains that may confuse the final conclusion.

In this he has admirably succeeded, and it would be difficult indeed to doubt what that conclusion is, which is that we are in the final stages of a world war which has continued, through various phases of advance, retreat, withdrawal, accommodation, counter-attack, since the end of World War II, and that we are now rapidly approaching its climax. The fundamental factor in this war was the Soviet Union's inflexible determination to establish a world hegemony and as an indispensable preliminary to doing so to destroy the alternative society established in the West. But it is not only the West which is threatened, but any area which offers the Soviet Union the possibility of advancing its strategic interests, whether in South America, or Asia, or Africa or elsewhere. All regions, and all régimes, of whatever kind, are equally exposed, and at the moment the threat to each and all is real and urgent because the Soviet Union has achieved a balance of military power sufficient to allow her to intervene at any particular point where her strategic interests dictate, with every prospect of being able to survive the kind of resistance, if any, she is likely to meet.

For Mr Crozier, and for many others, the conclusion to be drawn from such a situation is clear. It is not enough to change the balance of forces so much to the Soviet Union's disadvantage that she would for the moment be deterred from further expansionist efforts, though even this would tax her opponents' resources to the utmost. But this would only be to scotch the snake, not kill it, for the urge to expansion is so fundamental to the Soviet (and Russian) state that any temporary reverse only constitutes a brief breathing space before policies of aggression are once again renewed. For all those countries resistant to Soviet domination which Mr Crozier calls the "Target Area" of Soviet expansionism, mere deterrence is not enough; the only worthwhile objective of strategy is VICTORY (Mr Crozier's own capitals), by which I take him to mean the destruction of the Soviet Union in its present form and its reconstruction on a basis that would eliminate the fundamental political and ideological factors which make it a permanent menace to the world outside its borders and its influence.

MR CROZIER calls this a strategy for survival. I am not sure I would not call it a strategy for despair. But even if it were desirable, I doubt if it would be achievable because it would require a fundamental, even a revolutionary change in the relations between the states of what Mr Crozier calls the Target Area, and in particular between

[1] *Strategy for Survival*. By BRIAN CROZIER. Temple Smith, £5.50.

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those which now constitute the most industrially and technologically advanced areas of the world.

Since the end of World War II (and the beginning of Mr Crozier's World War III) we have grown up to take it for granted that the security of the free world (or even of Mr Crozier's Target Area) depends essentially upon the protection of the United States, and that the United States possesses the will, the means and the resources to make that protection effective. This belief was based on the universally accepted view of the United States as the richest, most powerful and most economically dynamic society in the world, with the means to provide in superfluity not only for her own needs but for those of all who look to her for protection and assistance.

In a remarkably intelligent book, *The Disintegrating West*,[2] Miss Mary Kaldor makes us realise that this view is very largely a hangover from an era which has already ceased to exist. For in fact the United States no longer holds the unchallenged economic leadership of the world and in respect of productivity, accumulation of wealth and rate of economic growth it has been surpassed, in Asia by Japan, and in the West by "Lotharingia": that region comprising Germany, the Benelux countries, Northern France and Northern Italy which the Emperor Charlemagne once bequeathed as part of his empire to his second son Lothar. In describing this decisive change in the relative economic position of the United States, Miss Kaldor makes clear the element of confusion and disarray it has brought into the politics of the West, or (in Mr Crozier's terms) the Target Area. Instead of occupying the status of the acknowledged leader of the free or Western world, the United States has to compete actively, for markets, for resources, for diplomatic and political support, with the economically more dynamic and more rapidly expanding regions of Europe and of Asia. At the same time, its own economic and political system is becoming increasingly transformed by the growth and expansion of the great multinational corporations whose primary interest is not in the prosperity of the United States as such but in such areas as Japan and Lotharingia where economic investment shows the largest and fastest return.

From Miss Kaldor's point of view, the weakness and confusion of the West is a reflection, less of the external threat represented by the Soviet Union, than of its own internal conflicts and contradictions, and in this, travelling by a very different route, she has come to a conclusion which is curiously like Mr Kennan's. For no one, I think, could read either Mr Kennan's contributions to ENCOUNTER or his own book, *The Cloud of Danger*,[3] without becoming aware that beneath his anxieties about the international situation of the United States there lies an even greater anxiety about its own internal problems and difficulties. In this Miss Kaldor is at one with him, and indeed she quotes as an epigraph to her book a sentence from an article contributed by Mr Kennan in ENCOUNTER in 1976: "I sometimes wonder what use there is in trying to protect the Western world against fancied external threats when the signs of disintegration from within are so striking. . . ."

SOMETIMES, reading or listening to discussions of the threat represented by the Soviet Union, I am reminded of Cavafy's marvellous poem, "Waiting for the Barbarians",[4] in which Cavafy describes how some decadent Greek Alexandrian city awaits the arrival of the barbarians who are at its gates. Everything is in readiness. The Emperor has risen early and sits on his golden throne to receive their leader. The Senate has ceased to legislate, for what laws are there for it to make? "When the Barbarians come they'll make the laws." The Consuls and Praetors are resplendent in all their finery, their amethyst bracelets and emerald rings:

Because the Barbarians will arrive today;
Things of this sort dazzle the Barbarians.

The public orators are absent,

Because the Barbarians will be here today;
And they are bored with eloquence and speech-making.

Everything is in readiness; and yet

Why should this uneasiness begin all of a sudden,
And confusion? How serious people's faces have become.
Why are all the streets and squares emptying so quickly,
And everybody turning home again so full of thought?
Because night has fallen and the Barbarians have not come.
And some people have arrived from the frontier;
They said there are no Barbarians any more.
And now what will become of us without Barbarians?—
Those people were some sort of a solution.

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[2] *The Disintegrating West*. By MARY KALDOR. Allen Lane, £5.50.

[3] *The Cloud of Danger*. By GEORGE F. KENNAN. Hutchinson, £5.95; Little, Brown, $8.95.

[4] Translation by John Mavrogondato.

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Three Poems by Freda Downie

Janey's Cottage

It could be said that the lobby
Is the cold centre of the cottage
Where the new owner has
Temporarily installed a refrigerator.

Or it could be said the lobby
Is where Janey mostly stands
Considering whether to ascend
Or to go through the door for the last time.

It could be thought
Habitual shadows in the kitchen
Are standing there
Preparing some dark cohesion

And that the weak flame
My shoulder blades see
Climbing illuminated stairs after me,
Is Janey looking for sleep.

Could be, next year, when I have gone,
When builders have admitted the sun
And only a photographer
From Homes and Gardens
Would recognise the place as home,

Janey will find unfamiliarity
Hard to wear, will wake
To morning's clucking contentment,
Remember the stream's original course
And braid her vaporous childish hair—

Or, waking to one ringing bell,
Will remember her crabbed front gardening
Hardly stopped at Elsdon Green,
Where God still stands, leaf-lammed,
Cold, but familiar.

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In front of the house

The streets of childhood are not far away.
They remain quiet and empty mostly, places
Where cries and crying can still be heard.
The rag-man trundles his incoherence,
One of the last beggars drags a foot
And his maniacal singing in the gutter,
And speed is something attained by
The wooden traffic of ingenious boys.
Every day, larger than the house,
The milkman's horse calls to trim the hedge
And deposit dung for superior gardens.

Soon the street photographer will call
With his box of tricks—and if you stand
By the front gate with freshly combed hair,
He will place his black cloth on his head
And sentence you to eternal proprietorship.

Going

Yes, I am quite the artist. I can still
Draw the snow-filled park from memory—
The trees, the lake, the frozen statuary.
But I'm second rate. I have no skill
Capturing the human face—not even yours,

Animated or grave, posed against blank skies
And traditional romantic properties.
But this is not surprising of course,
For I was uncertain of your expression—
And in the city's invading mist, the snow
Was preparing to run away—and I know
The lake was losing its firm resolution.
And you—you were merely part of the scene
Surviving the advances of the season—
One of the effects going, going, almost gone.
But at no affordable bidding of mine.

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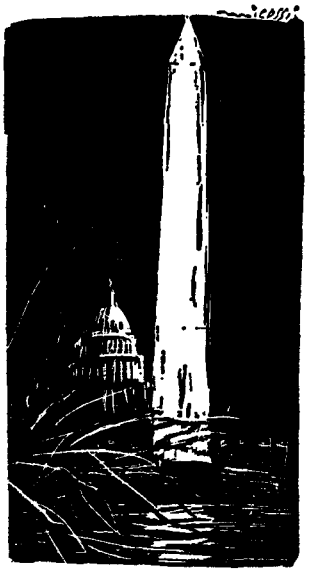
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

A Historian's Verdict

The Case of Alger Hiss

By Sidney Hook



ONLY someone who is relatively expert on the details of the Alger Hiss trials and on the climate of opinion prevailing at the time in the United States can appreciate the scope of Allen Weinstein's labours and the immensity of his achievement.[1] The size of the book, the multiplicity of the themes considered, the weight of the converging lines of evidence, the fact that at the outset of his research Weinstein believed that Hiss was probably innocent make his concluding sentence, despite its understatement, all the more impressive:

> ". . . the body of available evidence proves that [Hiss] did in fact perjure himself when describing his secret dealings with Chambers, so that the jurors in the second trial made no mistake in finding Alger Hiss guilty as charged."

Hiss was, in effect, although not formally (because of the statute of limitations), found guilty of espionage. His continued denial of his guilt indicates that he has perjured himself for 30 years and that he will probably go to his grave protesting his innocence.

The very fact that Hiss has persistently denied his guilt has puzzled some observers who find it psychologically difficult to understand how a guilty man could play the role of absolute injured innocence so long—"absolute" innocence, because Hiss insists not only that he was never a Communist or even a left-winger in politics but that at the time he knew Chambers he was completely unaware that Chambers was a Communist.

Hiss' persistence has been more than puzzling. It has been convincing to some who admit that the evidence alone, presented in a trial characterised by Hiss' own attorneys as fair, established his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Philip Nobile, writing on "The State of the Art of Alger Hiss" in *Harper's* (April 1976) concludes his article with the following:

> WHAT *is there about certain historic espionage cases that catches special public passions and makes polemical argumentation interminable? Is it the melodramatic mystery of the trail of clues and circumstances or the deeper currents of social and ideological attitudes?*
>
> *At any rate, for some 30 years now the American question of Alger Hiss' guilt—not unlike the French question of Captain Dreyfus' innocence—has agitated liberal lawyers, left-wing writers, conservative sceptics, so much so that at times to take a position (the unpopular one, believing in Hiss' guilt, i.e. his perjury, hence his espionage) was to have a lonely battle against the odds. Why did so many, especially among the liberal intelligentsia and in academic and indeed business circles, decline to believe what stared them in the face? Was it merely the stubborn emotional refusal to admit that such excrescences (espionage and treason; nowadays kidnapping and terrorist assassinations) could possibly have their "roots in the idealistic Left"?*
>
> *Be that as it may,* SIDNEY HOOK *contends that, for all the psychological complexities among believers and sceptics (none more Dostoevskian than the performance of the tragic protagonist himself), the case as far as hard facts are concerned should now be considered closed. We may eventually learn more about certain details. Could Alger Hiss ever have transmitted to Moscow anything so important as the messages Richard Sorge smuggled out of Tokyo for Stalin's eyes? And we may well have yet another round with desperate doubters ("still ambiguous", "some questions remain open", "not completely convincing", wrote some recalcitrant US reviewers about Allen Weinstein's definitive study of the case). But for now the guilt of Alger Hiss, which Professor Weinstein himself refused to accept when he began his researches to try to establish innocence and a frame-up, may be taken as proven.*
>
> M. J. L.

[1] *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case.* By ALLEN WEINSTEIN. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, $15.00; London, Hutchinson, £9.95.

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"My argument, perhaps naïve and sentimental, turns on psychology. I cannot conceive of a sane person perpetuating a quarter century [now closer to thirty years] of deceit, jeopardizing the welfare of family and the reputation of friends, in a doomed attempt to reverse what that person knows to be the truth.

And Hiss is not crazy. Instead he is serene. . . ."

However, as we shall see, there is a simpler explanation of Hiss' behaviour and serenity.

OTHERS BESIDES Nobile may not be convinced by Professor Weinstein's book. I am not referring now to those so emotionally committed to Hiss that they would not believe him even if he were to confess his guilt. Nor am I referring to those fanatical political partisans, at heart unreconstructed Stalinists for all their belated admission of Stalin's "mistakes", who have set the cause of the party higher than the cause of truth, and for whom the very concept of "objective truth" is suspect. Just as there probably will always be right-wing extremists in France with the mentality of members of the *Action Française*, who are convinced that Dreyfus was guilty, so the same type of mind among Communists will believe that Hiss is innocent regardless of the evidence. I am referring rather to those who, in the light of the shady pattern of events in the Watergate case and of Richard Nixon's early role in the Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities at which Hiss was publicly identified as a secret member of the Communist Party, have simply refused to assess the evidence. They have turned an issue of fact into one of symbolic allegiance; and there is no arguing with symbolic allegiances. It is as if one were to refuse to believe that Winston Churchill in 1918 was in favour of military intervention in the Soviet Union in order "to strangle Bolshevism in its cradle" because of his War-time alliance with Stalin and his unstinting praise of the defenders of Stalingrad. None the less, if those who approach the Hiss case with this bias can bring themselves to read Weinstein's careful analysis of the actual record, they will find he is no friend of Nixon. He takes a critical approach to Nixon's claims to resoluteness in helping unearth the truth about Hiss. But they will also find that far from being "Nixon's first victim", Hiss was a victim of the facts; more specifically, the documents presented by Whittaker Chambers when Hiss challenged him to air his charges against him without the protection of privileged testimony.

[2] Allen Weinstein, "Nadya—A Spy Story", ENCOUNTER (June 1977).

HISS

WHAT ARE THE CHIEF achievements of Allen Weinstein's five years of research and of his perusal of tens of thousands of pages of formerly classified FBI and Justice Department records? Leaving aside the comprehensiveness and dramatic effectiveness of the exposition of events, they are three.

(1) First, he establishes firmly and exhaustively the credibility of Chambers' own story of his involvement in the Communist underground assigned to collect information from strategic sources in the US government of possible use to the Soviet régime. He does this in various ways. He uncovers the many roots and tendrils of the underground Communist movement both before and after Hiss' involvement. Particularly engrossing is his account of the activities of Alexander and Elaine Ulanovski[2] and what it reveals of the atmosphere and organisation of the Communist underground in the early 1930s. Even more significant, because it indirectly involved Hiss, is his discovery in the Hiss defence files and those of the FBI of additional evidence of the existence and purposes of the Ware group. Of special significance is the testimony of the novelist Josephine Herbst, given to Hiss' defence attorneys—but refused to the FBI—that her husband, John Herrmann, had been a member of the Ware group, that she had known Chambers under his underground name of "*Karl*", that she was aware of the purposes of the

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Ware group, and that she had discussed with Karl the importance of Hiss' membership in it. And for the first time we have a trained historian's interview with Maxim Lieber and other Communists who knew and sometimes befriended Chambers and to whom Chambers had appealed in vain in his book *Witness* to come forward. Of special interest is his interview with Karel Kaplan, a Czech defector who had fled with thousands of pages from the secret archives of the Czech security police and who had worked hand-in-glove with the Soviet KGB. According to Kaplan, who had read through the interrogations between Noel Field (under arrest in Prague on suspicion of being a double agent) and the Czech security police, Field had named Alger Hiss as a fellow-Communist underground-agent in the US State Department. He explained his refusal to return to the US to resume work because of his fear that he would be involved in the Hiss case since he, Field, had already been mentioned by Hedda Massing, a former Soviet operative, in the second Hiss trial as someone she tried to recruit.

In several cases the new witnesses whom Weinstein had induced to speak to him about the Hiss case were former or present Communists—sympathetic to Hiss—who expected Allen Weinstein to vindicate Hiss when he published his book. No sooner had Weinstein's book appeared than a corps of researchers coordinated by Victor Navasky of *The Nation* checked out its every line. In an effort to discredit Weinstein's scholarship, Navasky charged (*The Nation*, 8 April) that he had deliberately misquoted and mis-stated six key interviews, and he cited repudiations from those interviewed. Maxim Lieber whom Chambers had failed to induce (despite his eloquent appeal in *Witness*) to come forward and tell what he knew gave the case away in his remarks to a reporter of *The Washington Post* (16 April):

> "Weinstein came to see me under false colors, representing himself as friendly to Hiss. I never would have said a single word to him if I'd known he was friendly to Chambers. I may have said things I wouldn't have said under different circumstances."

PROBABLY WEINSTEIN was still inclined to doubt Whittaker Chambers more than Alger Hiss when he interviewed Lieber; what he heard from Lieber, among other things, inclined him the other way. But the crucial question is whether Lieber told Weinstein what Weinstein reported him as saying in his book, or whether as Lieber now contends: "Weinstein made all these things up out of whole cloth. . . ." Unfortunately for Lieber, Weinstein recorded his remarks on tape. Two others of those interviewed by Weinstein have recanted what they said in whole or in part. They are Sam Krieger who (according to Chambers) recruited Whittaker Chambers into the Communist Party; and Karel Kaplan (who simply denies that Noel Field admitted Hiss was delivering US classified documents to the Kremlin —something Weinstein never asserted). They are also on tape. Of the three other recanters—Paul Willert, Ella Winter, and Alden Whitman—Weinstein claims in substantiation of his quotations,

> "I have not only the notes of my interviews but also letters from them, defense file memos, FBI records, and other interviews that corroborate their statements." (*The New Republic*, 29 April).

In the attempt to discredit Professor Weinstein those who have recanted have clearly overplayed their hand. Sam Krieger, who does not conceal his loyalty to the Kremlin, now claims that Chambers was never really in the Communist underground at all, that he was expelled from the Party and never reaffiliated with it. Krieger admits that one of his party aliases was "Clarence Miller" but denies that he is the same "Clarence Miller" who, as a defendant at the Gastonia trials in 1929, fled bail to the Soviet Union. Weinstein may well have been mistaken about the true identity of the Gastonian "Clarence Miller"; it bears not at all on the evidence of the case. Krieger acknowledges he was interviewed by Weinstein and that he permitted himself to be taped. At the time apparently he was under the impression that Weinstein was friendly to Hiss and intent upon exonerating him. Somewhat later he must have heard that the evidence had swung Weinstein the other way. For he claims to have contemplated legal action against Weinstein to recover the tape. As Warren Hinckle of *Ramparts* fame, to whose credulous ears Krieger confided his story, relates (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 May 1978):

> "At one time he [Krieger] was contemplating suing Weinstein for the interview but Alger Hiss, whom he had just met, talked him out of it. . . ."

This is passing strange. How did Krieger just happen to meet Hiss in 1975? Krieger, still a fanatical Communist and proud of it, would be the last person whom Hiss, were he as innocent of any Communist connection as he professes, would want to meet. Krieger insists that until *Perjury* was published he had no notion what line Weinstein would take. If this were the truth why would he be getting in touch with Hiss?

Despite these efforts to undermine Professor Weinstein's research, his reconstruction of Chambers' life before, during, and after his political experience has a compelling authenticity

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about it. It coheres with what every person who knew Chambers (and is now outside the Communist orbit) recalls. If one accepts Weinstein's biographical sketch of Chambers in its essentials, what plausible explanation can anyone have for his identification of Alger Hiss, among others, as a member of the Communist underground, especially in the light of the documentary evidence, save its truth?[3]

WHY, THEN, should Hiss' outright denial of any involvement with Chambers and the Communist underground be believed?

If one looks away from the evidence—and we must remember that Hiss was convicted not on Chambers' word but on the hard evidence of documents written in Hiss' hand and typed on the Hiss Woodstock typewriter—the only reason that could be offered for believing Hiss' denials was his credibility as the darling of the American Establishment—Hiss was the clerk of Mr Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, the protégé of Professor Felix Frankfurter, the President of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, the man who stood next to the President of the USA at the opening of the UN Conference in San Francisco. All one need do, Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt observed in one of her newspaper columns at the time, is to "look at the two men" to tell who was speaking the truth. Alas! in the world of espionage, especially ideological espionage, appearances may be quite deceptive. Given Hiss' role, his background in the eyes of those who recruited him constituted a remarkable protective colouration. It made him all the more valuable.

(2) The second of Allen Weinstein's indisputable achievements is that he destroys the credibility of Alger Hiss by showing that he lied persistently and consistently about one of the key pieces of evidence in the case, viz., the Woodstock typewriter on which the copies of the stolen classified US State Department documents were typed. The type of the documents matched the type found in the letters the Hisses had written. It was established that both the documents and the letters had been typed on an office model Woodstock. But where was the machine itself? Without it, the Government's case would not be very persuasive. Consequently, the search for the missing typewriter. For a long time it was a search in vain. Questioned about its whereabouts, Hiss professed complete ignorance. He repeatedly affirmed this to the FBI and to the Grand Jury then deliberating whether to indict him—or Chambers, or both—for perjury.

None the less, the records in Hiss' own defence files show that he had previously telephoned one

[3] Hiss himself denies that there were any homosexual overtones in what he insists was only a casual acquaintanceship between himself and Chambers. This rules out the malice of a rejected suitor as a motive on Chambers' part.

WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, in two sketches by his friend, Meyer Schapiro, made over two decades, the first (left) in 1923, the second (above) in 1938.

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of his attorneys (on 7 December 1948) asking him to check on a old machine he remembers giving to Pat, the son of Claudia Catlett, who used to assist the Hiss families with their housework. Yet "on three separate occasions" between 10 December and 15 December, he affirmed to the Grand Jury that he had no recollection of what had happened to it, whether it was given away or destroyed. By that time, the machine had become "hot" since Hiss' own experts had determined that the stolen Baltimore documents—produced by Chambers when Hiss sued for libel—and the Hiss private letters, used as technical standards of mechanical comparison, had been typed on the same machine. During the frantic search for the Woodstock typewriter, Hiss (as well as his brother Donald) knew where it was all the time! Only when the FBI began questioning the Catletts who had received and disposed of the Woodstock machine and who, out of loyalty to the Hisses, persistently lied to the FBI, did Hiss' defence recover the "smoking gun" to get credit in potential jurors' eyes for bringing in the evidence.

(3) The third major achievement of Allen Weinstein's book is to knock into a cocked hat, among other speculative fantasies, the notion of Hiss and his defenders that he was the "victim of a plot" by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), the FBI, and the Department of Justice to frame him by forging the Woodstock typewriter. The classified documents released to Weinstein, after he won his court action under the new US "Freedom of Information Act" showed that J. Edgar Hoover went into a tantrum over the failure of the horde of his FBI men to find the Woodstock typewriter. In the light of the continued lying by the Hisses and the Catletts, and especially the misleading hints by Priscilla Hiss that she disposed of the machine either to a second-hand typewriter store or junk shop or the Salvation Army—which sent squads of agents off on fool's errands—the ineptitude of the FBI seems somewhat mitigated. Even so, it appears that they were closing in on the Catletts when the Hisses beat them to it.

Much more devastating to the notion that Hiss was the target of a conspiracy are the official documents which show that despite all the incriminating evidence produced by Chambers, and despite the evasiveness and shiftiness in Hiss' testimony, there was a real struggle going on between HUAC and the Justice Department concerning which of the two men was to be indicted. HUAC naturally had a vested interest in Chambers. Were he to be indicted, its own revelations about Hiss—the crowning point of years of investigation—would be impugned. The Justice Department and the FBI were acting in concert with an Administration whose chief officer, the President himself, had declared the Hiss case to be a "red herring." To indict Hiss was to embarrass Harry Truman; not in his own eyes (since nothing could embarrass him) but in the eyes of the country.

Whittaker Chambers and J. Edgar Hoover seem to have mutually despised each other (albeit for different reasons). Actually, until the conclusive finding was made, shortly before the completion of the Grand Jury's term, that the Baltimore stolen documents and the Hiss standard letters had all been typed on the same Woodstock acknowledged to have been owned by the Hisses, there was a much greater likelihood that Chambers would be indicted for perjury than Hiss because Chambers had previously *denied* under oath that Hiss had been guilty of espionage. Even after the conclusive evidence was in, as Weinstein reveals, Chambers was not in the clear.

> "On December 15, the last day of the Grand Jury's term, Deputy Attorney General Peyton Ford phoned Assistant FBI Director Ladd to advise 'that he thought it possible that an indictment might be returned against Hiss.' Ladd asked Ford 'if he had forgotten the charges of perjury against Chambers', to which Ford replied that 'the Department wanted to see if they could obtain a conspiracy indictment for espionage first and thereafter they had in mind still considering perjury charges against Chambers. . . .'"

THE WHOLE NOTION that there was a conspiracy against Alger Hiss was born out of his despairing response to the Grand Jury on the day of his indictment. Confronted by the evidence that it was on *his* typewriter that the stolen government documents and been transcribed, he opined that Chambers must have sneaked into his home and typed the incriminating documents. The suggestion was greeted with some hilarity by members of the Grand Jury. What they did not know (and what Hiss must have known) was that two of the *defence* document examiners had already reported to Hiss' attorneys, on the basis of comparisons between samples of Priscilla Hiss' typing and the stolen Baltimore documents, that *she* had probably typed them. Had this been pointed out to him at the time, it is hard to conceive what retort Hiss could have made—other than telling the truth—save that Chambers by some paranormal means had taken possession of Mrs Alger Hiss' spirit. In a 20-page appendix devoted to *Forgery By Typewriter—The Pursuit of Conspiracy, 1948–1978*, Weinstein presents a masterly analysis of six different and incom-

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patible conspiracy theories advanced by Hiss partisans. He shreds them into absurdity.

IT MAY BE INSTRUCTIVE to the reader unfamiliar with the record to note that even if Whittaker Chambers had been indicted for perjury, at the same time or after Hiss, his conviction would be possible only on the evidence that Hiss was guilty of espionage. This apparent paradox is easily explained when it is recalled that, *originally, in order to spare Hiss*, against whom he had no personal animus, Chambers had denied both to HUAC and the Grand Jury that Hiss had engaged in espionage. (Actually, Chambers had told the truth about Hiss and others almost a decade earlier to A. A. Berle, Assistant-Secretary of State, almost immediately after the Stalin-Hitler Pact, in expectation that those he named who had fed him classified information would be retired from sensitive government posts only to find that instead they were being promoted!) When Chambers, driven and harried by Hiss' attorney, William Marbury, at the libel hearings, reversed himself and introduced the documentary evidence to support his charge of espionage, he admitted that his former explicit denial of Hiss' espionage role was perjurious. Had he been indicted and convicted for that perjury, the jury would have had *to be convinced that Hiss indeed was guilty of espionage* and that Chambers was lying when he denied it.

Some of Hiss' partisans who have characterised Chambers as "a self-confessed perjuror" and inferred Hiss' innocence on the basis of it, seem blithely unaware of the illogic of their position. For the only perjury to which Chambers confessed was his statement that Hiss was *not* an espionage agent for the Kremlin. Whatever else we may believe about Whittaker Chambers, if we believe that he was in fact perjuring himself in denying Alger Hiss' espionage activities, then we must believe in Hiss' guilt.

IT DOES NOT DETRACT in the least from Weinstein's magnificent achievement to say that it still remains true that the logic of the evidence introduced at the trials was more than sufficient to establish Hiss' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. What Weinstein has added increases the weight of the evidence against Hiss by exposing his calculated effort to conceal the whereabouts of the crucial typewriter, and by uncovering more of the root-structure of the Communist Party underground. There is no need to rehearse the details of the evidence that convinced 20 out of 24 jurors that Hiss was in effect a traitor to the United States on behalf of the Soviet Union. His guilt rested not on a linked chain of evidence all dependent on one premise or assumption but on a cable of intertwined strands of unequal length and strength. The legal logic of the case has already been stated and evaluated with admirable clarity by Judge Irving Younger.[4] But there was one particular piece of evidence whose extraordinary significance has been overlooked by those who are politically uninformed or unsophisticated about the history of the Communist movement.

Among the purloined materials produced by Chambers at the Baltimore hearings were four handwritten notes of classified cables. Three of them contained military and diplomatic information of great importance to the Soviet Union but which were outside the scope of concern of Hiss' section of the State Department, then headed by Francis B. Sayre. These original cables also contained information that *was* highly relevant to Sayre's international trade section but which, oddly enough, was not summarised on Hiss' handwritten memoranda. A fourth cable by Loy Henderson in Moscow sent to Secretary Cordell Hull referred to "the Rubens case."

A. A. Rubens was a Latvian Soviet secret agent (with an American-born wife) who had been recalled to Russia. He was arrested during the great Stalin purges in 1937 and charged with being "a Nazi spy." The couple was travelling at the time with two sets of false American passports made out to "Rubens" and "Robinson." Mrs Rubens (*née* Ruth Boergers) in distress told her story to some American newsmen in Moscow and solicited their help. Before long she too was jailed; but the story had already made headlines in the United States.

At the time, I was very much interested in the "Robinson-Rubens" case because the news reports indicated they had spent time in Yucatan, Mexico. This seemed to me vaguely suspicious. The John Dewey Hearings on Leon Trotsky and the truth about the Moscow Trials had just been completed in Coyacon, Mexico; and Herbert Solow aroused concern about the likelihood of another Moscow Trial at which the Rubenses would testify to discredit the work of the Dewey Commission. We, therefore, followed events with interest. Subsequently, it was learned that Chambers knew Rubens under the name of "Ewald" and in his articles on Soviet Espionage in the United States (written at the bidding of Solow) Chambers referred to the very document Hiss had copied and to other cables Loy Henderson had sent after interviewing Mrs Rubens in prison. The document Alger Hiss had hand-copied was the text of a cable from the wife of a former US intelligence agent identifying

[4] Irving Younger, *Commentary* (New York), August 1975.

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Rubens and cautioning against involvement despite Mrs Rubens' American citizenship. The Kremlin was intensely interested in knowing what the US government was going to do about the arrest of a native-born American citizen since the episode had caused considerable friction between the two governments. Apparently, judging from Chambers' account, the Russians were completely aware of the contents of all US communications about the couple and were greatly relieved when the State Department accepted Mrs Rubens' request to drop her case.

Weinstein quotes from Chambers' chilling recital of the interview between Mrs Rubens and the US *chargé d'affaires* in the presence of a Soviet Intelligence Officer, which shows that the latter was aware of the contents of the cable Hiss had copied! Nothing has ever been heard of Rubens and his wife since.

There was no plausible reason for Hiss to copy the cable about Robinson-Rubens. This was confirmed by his State Department superior, Francis Sayre; nor did Hiss offer any reasons for his transcription. He simply denied that the transcription was in his handwriting. According to Weinstein:

> "[Hiss] stuck by this in discussion with his own attorneys until the Spring of 1949 when FBI laboratory experts and *Hiss' own handwriting experts* confirmed that he had transcribed Henderson's cable" (my emphasis).

Hiss' explanations of the summaries of the three other cables were lame enough. He had no explanation of the fourth one. Even if he had not given it to Chambers and it had been transmitted by one of Chambers' other sources of information, the very fact that Hiss had made a copy of it was of damning significance.

THERE REMAINS TO ASSESS the only consideration which has been raised to dispute the authenticity of Whittaker Chambers' story. On several occasions Chambers gave as dates of his break with the Communist Party and its underground "late 1937." Later he put the date in 1938. All of the documentary material was dated in 1938. If Chambers really broke in 1937, how could he have had the documents dated 1938? The discrepancy is more apparent than real. One does not break with the Soviet Communist Party underground apparatus overnight. In every case it is a long drawn-out process, from the first doubts to the final irretrievable action. Especially is this true when one possesses dangerous knowledge involving the safety and even the lives of others.

In Chambers' case, we know that he had been ordered to report in person to Moscow. In those years this was often tantamount to a death sentence. Open refusal to return was dangerous. I have no doubt that in his own mind Chambers had firmly decided to break without fuss or feathers already in 1937. He had begun, so to speak, to run for his life even then, without making an overt hostile act. He had probably heard about what happened to Ewald (A. A. Rubens) and Julia Stuart Poyntz. And it was quite natural that he should begin carefully to squirrel away compromising stolen documents so as to have something to bargain for, and with, if it came to the crunch. Chambers had already come under suspicion because of the public political activities of some of his old, now anti-Stalinist Left-wing, friends with whom in violation of Party and Underground practices he maintained personal relations. They were active in the movement to establish an international commission before which Leon Trotsky could plead his case against the charges broadcast at the Moscow Trials that he had plotted from the very beginning of the October Revolution to destroy the Communist régime. I myself recall that towards the end of 1937 Professor Meyer Schapiro, the distinguished Columbia University art historian, informed me that Chambers was getting ready to "break with the Stalinists."[5]

[5] Professor Meyer Schapiro, still teaching at Columbia University, was a friend of Whittaker Chambers (1901–1961) over many decades. See the two sketches by him which are reproduced on p. 51.

When Colonel Boris Bykov took over the GPU control chair of Chambers' Soviet secret intelligence unit in New York, he asked for a number of presents to be given to loyal collaborators. Chambers had objected to money, but consented to expensive presents—and he was asked to purchase a number of Bokhara rugs, one of which was to go to Alger Hiss in Washington. Bykov instructed Chambers to explain that "these rugs had been woven in Russia and were being given to them as gifts from the Russian people in gratitude to their American comrades."

As it happened, Chambers, although a cultural historian of some merit, knew nothing about rugs, Oriental or otherwise, and he turned to his old friend Meyer Schapiro for advice. Dr Schapiro arranged the purchase with a rug dealer in New York. Chambers arranged its delivery to Hiss. Hiss and his wife admit having had the rug in their Washington apartment, but claimed it was given them in partial payment of the rent of their apartment by their paupered acquaintance, "George Crosley." They claim that they received the rug in 1935 but the documents of sale prove that the four rugs were purchased by Schapiro on 23 December 1936: additional evidence shows that the other three rugs were

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It was a fairly open secret at the time what Chambers was doing. I communicated the news to another old friend of Chambers, Herbert Solow, who not long after actively helped Chambers in making his break. All this, as Allen Weinstein reports, is confirmed in Solow's invaluable papers. All of us for years, and especially since the Moscow Trials, had been engaged in savage polemics with the Communist Party spokesmen and their literary allies, e.g., Malcolm Cowley, who defended the Moscow Trials. There is good reason to believe that Chambers was a marked man, that he knew this, and that both the record of the first and second Moscow Trials and the public criticisms of the crudely forged tales of the defendants—all "Gestapo agents" working for Hitler—contributed to undermining his faith in the Communist cause.

DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING evidence against Alger Hiss, some have found it difficult to believe in his guilt because of his unwearied, continued protestations of his innocence. It is psychologically impossible, they say, for someone so fine-grained and sensitive as Hiss —to whose likeable personal traits Chambers himself paid tribute—to persist in a series of monstrous lies in which he has involved so many worthy persons (in addition to the Stalinist hacks who have hewed to the Party line that Soviet espionage is a complete myth). To be sure, some who have read Hiss' own book in his own defence, *In The Court of Public Opinion* (1957), or heard him speak, have been puzzled by the absence of that tone of anguished sincerity and outraged moral conviction we usually associate with innocent men crying out against an injustice. Someone observed that Hiss sounds more like a cautious Philadelphia lawyer intent upon getting a verdict of "not proven" than like an innocent victim of a conspiracy. This is a matter of style, and is inconsequential. Hiss had never been vehement about anything. It is the unyielding asseveration of innocence in the face of evidence strong enough to convict a man in any enlightened criminal jurisdiction that has impressed those who are still sceptical. It undoubtedly influenced the scandalous decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to readmit Hiss to the Massachusetts bar, the first US lawyer ever readmitted following a major criminal conviction. And this despite the remark of the presiding justice, "Nothing we have said here should be construed as detracting one iota from the fact that in considering Hiss' petition we consider him to be guilty as charged. . . . "

The most plausible hypothesis that accounts for Hiss' public posture as a victim of a conspiracy by the American government involving all of its three branches is that he is still a "true believer", a species of fanatical Communist (even if formally not a member), case-hardened by his experience, sustained by the hope, and sometimes by the conviction, that someday he will be honoured as a hero of the New Order when it spreads throughout the world. It is not well known that although Whittaker Chambers willingly agreed to take a lie-detector test, Hiss refused! A person sincerely convinced that he has spoken the truth, that he has nothing to hide, that the only lies that have been uttered are those of Chambers is unlikely to refuse the opportunity to be tested together with his accuser. When Hiss' devoted friend, Dr Carl Binger, suggested that he be injected with scopaline (the "truth serum") in hopes that he would recall details of his early relationship with Chambers to undermine Chambers' story, he refused. It is significant that Hiss has refused to meet Professor Weinstein in open debate to discuss the evidence against him. If my hypothesis is true, a day may come when the Kremlin will honour its man-in-Washington openly in the same way that it has honoured another valiant operative, Richard Sorge, its man-in-Tokyo, who obtained (and relayed to Moscow) the Japanese war plan against the United States. This enabled Stalin to dispatch the Siberian troops, positioned to oppose a Japanese attack, to Moscow in time to save the city.

We do not really know the full extent of Hiss' intelligence services to the Soviet Union, for the purloined documents in Chambers' possession were culled only from those delivered by Hiss over a short three-month period. Chambers could not (or would not) recall the content of the communications received during previous years. Nor is the period accounted for between Chambers' break and the time when rumours about Hiss became so thick that he was eased out of the State Department. Although we cannot now determine the extent or degree of Hiss' guilt, the fact of his guilt can no longer be contested on any rational grounds.

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delivered in 1937, the same year in which Chambers asserted he gave Colonel Bykov's present to the Hisses. The Hisses' maid identified the rug, testifying that it was not used but kept in a storage closet. One of the other recipients of a rug (Julian Wadleigh) testified that "the only recompense for his [underground] work was a nine-by-twelve Persian rug. . . ." Professor Schapiro still had the receipt from Touloukian in Manhattan for the four rugs. A rug expert, acting on behalf of Hiss' attorney, inspected Hiss' rug in 1949, and declared it to be a Bokhara rug as indicated on the sales slip which Professor Meyer Schapiro received for the four rugs he purchased at Whittaker Chambers' request in 1936.

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SCIENCE

Scientific Neutrality

Between Truth & Irresponsibility—By MAX BLACK

WHAT DOES "scientific neutrality" mean? Although the expression is widely used, its meaning is unclear and perhaps misleadingly suggestive. The dictionary meaning of neutrality is that of a policy of withholding aid from states that are at war with one another. More generally, neutrality is the attitude of one who takes neither side in some dispute or conflict.

In the context of "*scientific* neutrality", calling science[1] "neutral" implies that scientists are noncombatants. But in what war, in what dispute, are scientists supposed to take no sides and to remain indifferent?

The conflict in which scientists are supposed to remain neutral can be conceived, for a start, as a conflict between practical policies. Consider the question whether or not to smoke cigarettes. The prevailing view is that science can only provide factual information that is relevant to this issue, and has nothing to say about the values that are involved: such factual information can be ammunition for either side. But many people think it would be wrong for a scientist *as a scientist* to tell individual smokers, or the society to which they belong, which choice to make. Above all, science, on this view, has nothing to say about whether lung cancer is an evil: that crucial judgment is up to the consumer. Expert scientists are supposed to say to their fellow citizens: "Whether you take lung cancer to be good or bad is your affair. And anything you propose to do about the risks and dangers of cigarette smoking is also your affair. As scientists, we have nothing to say about such value judgments or the appropriate policy decisions. We stand neutral." According to this view, a similar posture of "neutrality" is also in order—is, indeed, required—in more controversial issues such as abortion or medical experiments upon uninformed subjects.

THE CONFLICT IN WHICH SCIENTISTS are supposed to remain neutral may also involve a clash between moral positions rather than between practical policies. Consider, for example, the question whether a nation is justified in committing genocide. According to the prevailing view, the scientist, as scientist, has nothing to say about this. If a nation wishes to engage in genocide, that is its right and privilege. Science can provide the tools—the most efficient means for achieving that end. As between approving and condemning genocide, science is neutral: it has, one might say, no moral dimensions. The doctors who experimented on the hapless inmates of Nazi Germany's concentration camps cannot be reproached *as* scientists.

This conception of the scientific expert as one who stands aside from the clashes of policies and moralities—as, say, Switzerland stood aside from the war between Germany and the Western Powers—is misleading in one important respect. A neutral is one who chooses not to take sides, and must therefore necessarily have the power to be a partisan. But if "scientific neutrality" is a reality and not a myth, it must be viewed as essential to science and incapable of removal or amelioration. This means that scientists have no choice about taking sides on the agonising personal and social problems of our time. But then talk about the "neutrality" of science smacks somewhat of the ridiculous—like calling bread neutral because it can feed sinners or saints indifferently. If there can be no scientific choice, or partisanship in matters of policy or morality, there can, strictly speaking, be no scientific neutrality either: science just has no direct bearing upon any except scientific issues. On this view, it would perhaps be better to speak of scientific irrelevance. Nevertheless, I shall continue to use the convenient if somewhat misleading label of "neutrality."

The thesis of the essential neutrality of science

[1] Throughout this essay I shall be thinking of the obligations of scientists. References to "science" should be regarded only as convenient shorthand.

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might usefully be broken down into two subviews. If science really can say nothing about what should be done or should not be done, it might be called *normatively neutral*. If it can say nothing about what is good or bad, right or wrong, it might be called *evaluatively neutral*.

Whether in its normative or evaluative version, the neutrality thesis depends in the first instance upon the answers to some troublesome questions of logic. If science really is normatively and evaluatively neutral, that is something we shall just have to accept: to be morally indignant about it would be as absurd as to complain that 2 and 2 make 4.

SO FAR AS I KNOW, the only reason, but a powerful one, in favour of the neutrality thesis is the alleged existence of a "logical gap" between "is" and "ought." More specifically, there are supposed to be conclusive reasons for holding that no proposition containing normative words like "should", "should not", "must", "must not" can follow from *factual* propositions—the kinds of propositions that science seeks to certify as true or probable.

The classical form of this argument is due to David Hume and continues to be a part of the current orthodoxy of nearly all professional philosophers. Hume's argument is straightforward and deceptively simple. In a famous and much quoted passage in his *Treatise*[2] Hume contends that all the moralists he knows make an imperceptible transition from observations about human affairs or assertions about the existence of God, all expressed with "the usual copulation of propositions, *is* and *is not*", to normative conclusions "connected with an *ought* or *ought not*." He says that this transition is "of the last consequence" and needs to be explained. In his own words: "It is necessary . . . that a reason should be given for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it." The nerve of Hume's argument, therefore, is the persuasive idea that the conclusion of a valid deductive argument can contain only material that is already contained in the premises.

Of course there is one way in which new material of a normative or evaluative sort can be present in a valid conclusion. From the "factual" premise that omelettes cannot be made without breaking eggs, it certainly follows that *if* omelettes ought to be made *then* eggs ought to be broken. What Hume means is that no categorical or unconditional "ought"-conclusions can follow from factual premises.

This certainly seems, at least at first sight, extremely plausible. But the matter is not so clear. How do we know that a given proposition is factual, non-normative, in the relevant sense? The absence of the crucial words "ought" or "should" is not a reliable criterion. For example, the proposition that murder is a sin certainly does logically imply the conclusion that one ought not to commit murder. But how are we to tell that the premise in question really is "normative"? Well, one might fall back upon the idea that the proposition about murder is unverifiable. But that raises further and controversial questions that are no part of Hume's formal argument. His famous argument needs to be supplemented by further considerations about what propositions shall count as being in some appropriate sense "factual" or "objective"—that is to say, true or false independently of the desires or hopes of the persons who assert and believe them. Behind this issue there lurk difficult questions about how we should conceive of the aims and procedures of scientific investigation. Should we conceive of science as exclusively concerned with approximating to knowledge, or is it proper to take some broader view?

MY OWN VIEW IS that Hume's argument, in the form in which I have presented it, is *circular*. I believe that certain categorical "should"- and "ought"-propositions do have truth-value, and can be certified as true objectively (independently of desires or hopes). If so, Hume was wrong in thinking them "altogether different" from scientific propositions. In a properly comprehensive sense of "knowledge"—which is broader than that of scientific knowledge narrowly conceived—some normative and evaluative propositions can be known to be true. But if so, Hume's argument collapses and better arguments must be found for the logical segregation of scientific truths from practical and moral ones.

These questions are too intricate and controversial for detailed discussion here. I mention them in order to counteract the widespread opinion that somehow the independence of "is" from "ought" has been established once and for all by logicians and philosophers.

IN A WAY it does not matter for our present purpose whether Hume's critics are right or wrong. For I think we are entitled to assume that

[2] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), Bk. 3, Pt. 1, Sec. 1. Those who wish to pursue the philosophical issues further might be referred to my essay, "The Gap Between 'Is' and 'Should' ", chapter 3 of *Margins of Precision* (1970). A useful collection of related papers is *The Is/Ought Question*, W. D. Hudson, ed. (1969).

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human beings, however diverse their moral or religious backgrounds, can agree upon certain fundamental ethical principles. We must postulate this in order to postulate the possibility of any kind of rational dispute about means or ends.

If we were to encounter somebody who genuinely thought it all right to eat young children in order to increase our food supply, argument would be pointless. Such a person would have to be treated as monstrously perverted or insane. Therapy or something more drastic would be in order. So even if factual propositions had to be regarded as logically segregated from normative propositions, the introduction of some generally acceptable normative premises would legitimate the derivation of normative conclusions.

On the whole, the thesis of the gap between "is" and "ought", although it has had enormous appeal and very widespread currency, deserves to be regarded as one of the most debilitating dogmas of contemporary Western civilisation.

We should especially beware of the following seductive but invalid syllogism: Science is a good thing; science is necessarily neutral; therefore scientific neutrality is a good thing. For this syllogism might easily be converted, by negation of the conclusion, into: Scientific neutrality is a bad thing; science is necessarily neutral; so science is a bad thing. Qualms about the so-called neutrality of science jeopardise the supporting public attitudes without which science cannot thrive.

Nevertheless, the logical version of the neutrality thesis deserves to be taken seriously, if only for its practical consequences. If neutrality has to be accepted on logical grounds and science really has no intrinsic bearing upon human welfare, the case for massive support of science may well appear problematic. Even if the human usefulness of science can be grounded in its indirect bearing upon welfare and happiness, it is natural for a firm believer in the neutrality thesis to have some serious qualms about the ultimate value of science. One might well ask: If scientific truths are only bridges between non-rational directives and evaluations, what is so good about science? If a scientist is really, from a logical point of view, a kind of engineer, supplying factual bridges between the normative and evaluative considerations that matter most to human beings, what is so good about being a scientist? The roots of one kind of anti-scientific revolt (which I deplore) may be found in this crude kind of attitude. However, questions about whether science as a whole, or particular scientific projects, is worth pursuing cannot be brushed aside. For science, considered as an activity, is not an uncontrollable natural phenomenon like the earth's rotation. As a system of voluntary activities it is, at least in principle, amenable to internal or external control.

THE "NEUTRALITY THESIS" becomes particularly pernicious when coupled with a correlative view about the alleged "subjectivity" of normative and evaluative judgments, and especially so when the realm of rationality is exclusively identified with that of scientific discourse.

Let me give two recent examples of this. In an article entitled "On the Logical Relationships Between Knowledge and Values",[3] Jacques Monod, the well-known biologist, says the following:

> Science rests upon a strictly *objective* approach to the analysis and interpretation of the universe, including Man himself and human societies. Science ignores, and must ignore, value judgments. Knowledge (yet) discloses and inevitably suggests new possibilities of action. But to *decide* upon a course of action is to step out of the realm of objectivity into that of values which, by essence, are non-objective and therefore cannot be derived from objective knowledge. There is strictly no way of *objectively* proving that it is BAD to make war, or kill a man, or to rob him, or to sleep with one's own mother.

On the same page Monod says "Objective knowledge defines the alternatives. By itself, it does not, in any way, help in solving the agonising ethical problems which science only poses." Later on, he says "Science indeed cannot create, derive or propose values", and he speaks about the necessity for the "*choice*" of value systems. Even the decision to become a scientist, says Monod, results from a "deliberate axiomatic choice of a standard of value."

In these remarks, which could be paralleled by any number of similar ones by distinguished scientists and intellectuals, objectivity connotes what is "given" regardless of human wishes and valuations, while "values" are treated as a matter of mere arbitrary "choice." So the questionable but unquestioned dogma of the gulf between the factual and the normative gets coupled to an equally dubious dogma of the arbitrariness and subjectivity of all norms and values.

MY SECOND EXAMPLE is taken from an article published three years ago in the *New York Times Magazine*.[4] Robert L. Heilbroner (Professor of Economics at the New School for Social Re-

[3] In Watson Fuller, ed., *The Social Impact of Modern Biology* (1971). The quotations I have used will be found on pp. 12 and 15.

[4] Robert L. Heilbroner, "What has Posterity Ever Done for Me?", *New York Times Magazine*, 19 January 1975, pp. 14–15.

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search) there considers the question, once raised by Adam Smith, whether "a man of humanity, given the choice, would prefer the extinction of a hundred million Chinese in order to save his little finger." (Why Chinese, one wonders?) One might have supposed the answer to Adam Smith's question was obvious. But listen to Professor Heilbroner's comment. He does say that it would be "outrageous" to attach such fantastic value to one's finger or—to turn to his more immediate subject—outrageous to sacrifice posterity for the benefit of those alive today. But he also thinks that "there is no rational answer" to such terrible questions. And this

> reveals the limitations—worse, the suicidal dangers—of what we call "rational argument" when we confront questions that can only be decided by *an appeal to an entirely different faculty from that of cool reason.* More than that, I suspect that if there is cause to fear for man's survival it is because the calculus of logic and reason will be applied to problems where they have as little validity, even as little bearing, as the calculus of feeling or sentiment applied to the solution of a problem in Euclidean geometry.

Here we have a kind of muddled fantasia on a theme from Hume: "cool reason" is contrasted with "the unbearable anguish we feel if we imagine ourselves as the executioners of mankind." Well, if Heilbroner is prepared to rely upon the "unbearable anguish" of responsibility for mortal injury to human beings, he cannot be an attentive reader of the distinguished newspaper in which his article appeared. Can anybody seriously think that there is no good reason for preferring the loss of one's little finger to the murder of even a *single* human being? Or that people should be regarded as perfectly rational if they were to adhere to an insane scale of values? I can only marvel at the advocacy of so peculiar a notion of rationality that confines reason to the consideration of factual and technical propositions. Scientific activity regarded as rational in this way runs the danger of speedily becoming inhuman.

I have not cited these examples in order to pillory the eminent gentlemen in question, but merely to illustrate the pernicious effects of the dogma of the absolute separation between "is" and "ought", between the factual and the normative.

ANY APPROACH to our problems that confines attention to the products of scientific activity considered as isolated propositions, and any approach that conceives of knowledge as merely the justified assertion of such propositions, is misleadingly and inappropriately abstract. The weightiest, most urgent, problems of "neutrality" are unaffected by the supposed logical gap between scientific truths and norms or values. If we think of "science" more concretely and realistically as something that human beings do, the issues, as I shall hope to show, look very different.

So far I have been discussing science in its relations to values and norms in a very abstract way, as if scientific propositions were simply "given" like natural objects, and as if the only proper questions for consideration were the logical ones of the relations between scientific propositions and normative or evaluative ones. It is time to remind ourselves of how much is ignored in this abstract approach, and to consider science as a system of human activities—a far more than merely contingent or incidental contrivance for the delivery of "eternal truth." So let me raise the question of neutrality again, now in connection with the enormously complex system of activities that deliver what counts, at least for the time being, as "knowledge."

What are we to say about the neutrality of science considered as a complex of *actions*?

Well, the most obvious point is that every human action is in principle subject to practical and moral evaluation. It always makes sense to ask whether what human beings are doing is prudent or wise, satisfactory, intelligent, right or wrong. All action is directed, rightly or wrongly, correctly or mistakenly, towards ends judged to be right. Accordingly, it always makes sense to ask whether these ends have been properly evaluated, or whether there is reason to suppose that their choice has been misguided or evil. In their capacity as active agents, scientists, like all other human beings, are necessarily subject to such normative and evaluative appraisals.

We are therefore entitled, indeed obliged, to ask such questions as: What are the goals of science? Can they be approved without qualification or reservation? Are they supreme? What are the costs ("opportunity costs" as economists say) of supporting science, or some particular scientific project, rather than doing something else? The only ways in which these questions could be brushed aside would be if the supreme goals of science were either plainly and uncontroversially good (or at least universally accepted as such) or, on the other hand, were so unimportant, humanly speaking, as not to deserve scrutiny. Similar considerations apply to the means used by scientists: issues of moral evaluation could be brushed aside if the consequences of scientific activity were so trivial or so obviously good as to make criticism pointless. In short, the only way to dodge moral questions about the values of science would be to hold that the goals and procedures of science were either effectively inconsequential or else uncontroversially good.

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Now that we focus upon the manifestation of science as human activity, my original question about the neutrality of science becomes first, "Is science negligible or harmless in its consequences?" and secondly, "Are the ends of scientific activity unequivocally and unreservedly good?" I shall not linger over questions concerning the practical momentousness of scientific activity, since that is too obvious to need discussion. But it is worth raising questions about the final end of scientific knowledge because (as I shall argue) there is a tendency to transfer illicitly certain important and genuine values that are implicit in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake to the whole of scientific activity in all its amplitude and variety.

SCIENCE, AS ITS ETYMOLOGY and that of its German equivalent, *Wissenschaft*, indicate, has some essential connection with *knowledge*. Considered as an activity, it needs to be considered as the pursuit and the discovery of knowledge and has of course been so defined on innumerable occasions. If we are to consider whether the pursuit of knowledge is a supreme and unqualified good we shall have to make an obvious distinction between inquiry that yields information and inquiry that yields understanding; between collecting items of fact and searching for explanatory principles, at all levels, from superficial empirical generalisations to the deepest principles of physics.

It seems obvious to me that knowledge in the form of information is not, without qualification, a good thing. There is probably more truth (more "bits" of information) in a new telephone directory than in the whole of Karl von Frisch's beautiful work on bees; but it would be perverse to prefer the former to the latter, or to advocate "scientific" research on the contents of telephone directories. If the gathering of information were an unqualified good we would have to salute the Watergate conspirators and the keepers of the CIA files as behaving like true scientists.

Apart from such obvious points, there is the consideration that the collection and systematic accumulation of knowledge is inescapably selective, and demands the constant suppression and elimination of irrelevant information. (To see anything at all is necessarily to turn a blind eye to what you don't want to see: if you look at individual trees you will be unable to see the wood; and if you look at the wood you will necessarily ignore details about the trees.) Because it implicates human choices it therefore inescapably commits the chooser to making value-judgments.

When we turn to the other product of scientific activity, understanding, we might suppose the implicated values are obvious. Isn't it always better to understand than to be blinded by illusion or prejudice? Well, the same elementary points apply: it all depends upon the objects of understanding—their value and the uses (if any) which the understanding is to serve. Is it to be seriously argued that it is a good thing to understand the most painful ways of killing and torturing innocent people just because that is knowledge? Would it not be better to be ignorant and to remain ignorant about such matters?

The chief point that I am making, and I hope a fairly obvious one, is that the undeniable worth and dignity of science (considered as the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, whether of facts or of explanatory principles) depend upon value-choices: choices of significance and relevance, choices of importance and fruitfulness, and above all, choices concerned with ultimate worth to human beings. Paul Goodman once said, in a striking phrase, that "technology is a branch of moral philosophy, not of science."[5] I am not sure that I agree. Moral philosophy is difficult enough without trespassing upon engineering. But one can see what he means. I suggest that the same insight also applies to science, even in its purest manifestations. Considered in the round, the most "pure", abstract and apparently "useless" branches of science are inescapably value-dependent and value-laden.

I DO NOT WISH to be mistaken for an enemy of "basic science" or of "the pursuit of science for its own sake." There is plainly great value in disinterested science, properly enlisting the devotion and sacrifice of some of the most gifted members of our species. And the disinterested pursuit of truth about the physical universe, the biological realm, and political and social institutions is of great value, won with difficulty, constantly under attack, and to be secured only by constant vigilance. I share the view of Julien Benda in his famous book *La Trahison des clercs* (translated as *The Great Betrayal*), that we shall always urgently need truth-seekers—not only scientists, but scholars and artists and poets as well—who will pursue and declare the truth as they see it, without regard for factional and national interests or for the distorting influences of passion, envy and greed. The autonomy and freedom from interference that are demanded by disinterested truth-seekers can be approved if we hold, as we should, that knowledge and under-

[5] In his essay, "Can Technology Be Humane?", quoted from *The Social Responsibility of the Scientist*, Martin Brown, ed. (1971), p. 251. The quotation continues: "It [technology] aims at prudent goods for the commonweal and to provide efficient means for these goods."

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standing for their own sake are great goods. Surely knowledge cannot be deleterious to human welfare and ought to be accessible to and enjoyed by all as a common good?

Yet the great dilemma posed by the extraordinary and unforeseeable efflorescence of science and technology in recent years has been the increasing impossibility of separating the noble and sublime conception of science from its practical consequences. The terrible unintended consequences of science and technology set questions about the "neutrality" of science in a radically new perspective.

WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED the *classical ideal* of the scientist as a disinterested pursuer and lover of truth can be wholeheartedly followed by solitary scientists or solitary scholars—Gilbert White in the countryside around Selborne, or Einstein in the Patent Office at Berne, discovering and contemplating truth, with no ulterior motive, for the sake of the radiant pleasure of the pursuit itself, isolated from the market-place and the war room, sharing their discoveries only with a small group of like-minded devotees of the truth for its own sake. But this idyllic picture, which can hardly have been a reality except sporadically, has long been overtaken by the Baconian ideal of science for the sake of "dominion over nature"—for the sake of "the effecting of all things possible."

We have indeed come a long way from the classical ideal of the independent scholar communicating only with a small group of like-minded researchers. The latest official figures that I have been able to obtain show that in the United States alone in 1976 over 540,000 scientists and engineers were working in research and development. Since this constitutes about one third of the total estimated number of engineers and scientists then employed, the total comes to over 1,600,000.[6] For the cost of this extraordinary effort we have an estimate for 1976 of over 38 billion dollars for research and development, of which thirteen and a half billion dollars were for basic and applied research. The Department of Defence itself spent in 1976 over nine billion dollars for research and development.[7]

Considering now the intellectual product alone, we find such statistics as these: that the *Physical Review* for 1976 amounted to 15,690 pages and weighed approximately 120lbs. For the same year, the number of abstracts published in *Physics Abstracts* amounted to 94,930 and occupied 6,516 pages.[8] My estimate is that anybody who undertook simply to read superficially the volume of work produced in physics in that one year alone would have to spend from three to six months doing nothing else.

NOW IT IS IMPLAUSIBLE to suppose that society should spend such enormous sums, and promote such intensive training and employment of high talent, in the service of the noble ideal of the disinterested pursuit of truth. Indeed, considering the very high proportion of financial support for science that comes from industry and departments of defence, one would expect the effective goal of this vast enterprise to be at least strongly compatible with the ruling goals of industry and the military. That is to say, with the goals of providing ways of making more profits and more efficient instruments of destruction. This intimate coupling of scientific activity with the military-industrial complex has cast a shadow over the noblest aspect of Bacon's vision: the use of science to increase human welfare and happiness. Fortunately, welfare and happiness can often be profitable, so a more sanguine view of the situation might dwell upon the undoubted and enormous contributions of applied science and technology to the control of disease, improvement in communication, and the pleasure and comfort of (say) 20% of all human beings alive today.

BUT THE PLAIN LESSON of the fantastic explosion of science in modern times is that the separation of pure science from its applications is no longer feasible in the context of moral evaluation. The purest and most recondite discoveries of disinterested scientists can now, in a relatively short time, be harnessed to the production of new ways of transforming individual lives and the very shape of society.

This means that the ground has been cut away from the classical claim for the autonomy of pure science. So long as the scientist could be regarded as a harmless discoverer and contemplator of aesthetically satisfying truth, the rest of us could admire and applaud (even when we could not understand) and consider humanity dignified by such devotion, as it is dignified by the existence of any spectacular realisation of human excellence. But the case is altered when the consequences of such admirable activity can be and are often intended to be of immediate and momentous effect, so momentous that the bare

[6] Figures taken from *National Patterns of R&D Resources: Funds and Manpower in the United States (1953–1977)*, prepared by the National Science Foundation.

[7] Figures taken from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1976*, prepared by the US Department of Commerce.

[8] These data were obtained by my colleague, Tara Blau.

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survival of human beings becomes a debatable and unsettled question. Science is even more terrible in its potentiality for evil than the atomic bombs for which it is responsible. Over every scientific laboratory should be pasted the warning: "DANGER: SCIENTIST AT WORK."

Whether one takes an optimistic or pessimistic view of the probable consequences of the massive transformation of the natural and man-made environment and the conditions of social life that are traceable, in the end, to the innocent classical delight in knowledge, the conclusion is inescapable that the claim of moral innocence must now be dismissed as a mere vestigial survival of an earlier and safer era. It is one thing for a pure geometer to demand to be left alone without impertinent claims from the surrounding society to prove that his work has any practical application, and without irrelevant injunctions to pay attention to the negligible immediate consequences of what he is doing. It is quite another thing to hear the same plea of moral blamelessness and "neutrality"—in the sense now of moral innocuousness—made by contemporary scientists working directly, say, for the military establishment. When the immediate consequences of scientific activity are so plain, a plea of "scientific neutrality" can only be properly characterised as an expression of deliberate myopia or, to put it bluntly, moral irresponsibility.

LET ME OFFER AN EXAMPLE of this kind of irresponsibility. On page eight of *The New York Times* for 27 December 1967, there appeared an interview with Dr Louis Frederick Fieser, who was in charge of a team of Harvard University scientists developing napalm during World War II. He is reported to have said that he felt free of "any guilt." He is also quoted as saying

> "You don't know what's coming. That wasn't my business. *That is for other people.* I was working on a technical problem that was considered pressing. [My italics]"

He went on to say:

> "I distinguish between developing a munition of some kind and using it. You can't blame the outfit that put out the rifle that killed the President. I'd do it again, if called upon, in defense of the country."

When asked about the use of napalm in Viet Nam, Dr Fieser said:

> "I don't know enough about the situation in Viet Nam. It's not my business to deal with political or moral questions. That is a very involved thing. Just because I played a role in the technological development of napalm doesn't mean I'm any more qualified to comment on the moral aspects of it."

The moral callousness of these remarks is matched by their confusion of thought. The idea, for example, that one needs moral "qualifications" in order to consider the consequences of one's actions is very odd. But it is unfair to saddle Dr Fieser alone with this attitude, which continues to be widely held. The social scientist George A. Lundberg said it plainly, nearly 40 years earlier.[9]

> It is not the business of a chemist who invents a high explosive to be influenced in his task by considerations as to whether his product will be used to blow up cathedrals or to build tunnels through the mountains. Nor is it the business of the social scientist in arriving at laws of group behavior to permit himself to be influenced by considerations of how his conclusions will coincide with existing notions, or what the effect of his findings on the social order will be.

Against such misplaced high-mindedness, we ought to say that in the case of research plainly intended to produce flame-throwers and incendiary bombs, the moral responsibility of the chief inventors and artisans cannot be evaded by professions of innocence. (That the persons most directly involved can have a good conscience only adds to the horror of the situation.) Responsibility for the invention and use of such "scientific devices" as napalm is of course shared by many, and no doubt belongs primarily to those who have the final power to commission and use such inhuman devices. But the inhumanity of politicians does not absolve technologists, scientists and all of us from complicity. And given the key role played by scientists at all levels of involvement it is particularly hard to absolve them from fairly direct responsibility. My purpose on this occasion has not been to suggest practical measures by which to discharge the undoubted responsibility that is borne by science and every society that supports it. My purpose has been the logically prior one of arguing that the responsibility exists. Some ground for hoping that this responsibility will be discharged can be found in the determined efforts of those who refuse to regard scientists as mercenaries, fit for any purpose, good or evil. The optimist can hope for a time when science will return to its ancient and nobler functions of enlarging human understanding and relieving human misery. But as Groucho Marx must surely have said upon some occasion, "It takes an optimist to be an optimist nowadays."

[9] In *Trends in American Sociology*, G. A. Lundberg, R. Bain and N. Anderson, eds. (1929), pp. 404–5, quoted from Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1953), p. 543.

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THEATRE

On the Way to the Pig Festival

Dramatic Illusions—By ROGER SANDALL

JACQUES, one sometimes irritably feels, deserves a good kick in the pantaloons for that trope about universal theatre. Not all the world's a stage, nor all the men and women merely players, and while it might have been all right to declaim this sort of thing in an age when figurative speech was taken figuratively, times have changed. Harmless whimsy in yesterday's Forest of Arden looks altogether more menacing in today's Groves of Academe, where irony is seldom recognised, where scores of earnest men and women are always traipsing about looking for things called "paradigms" to hang their thoughts on, and where, over the years, a surprising number of them—though whether as a result of reading *As You Like It* is hard to tell—seem to have found the notion of "Life as Theatre" a persuasive metaphor.

In the 1930s and '40s, Kenneth Burke invented the highly idiosyncratic scheme of socio-literary enquiry he called "dramatism." In 1959 Erving Goffman announced that what we had been pleased to regard as the "self" was really just a kaleidoscope of roles. In the 1960s the philosophically inclined sociologist Peter Berger exploited the dramatic metaphor in a wide-ranging intellectual effort devoted, among other things, to divinity. Each of these men has written many books, and after such a variety of material from the fields of literature, social psychology, and sociology, it was only to be expected that some political applications would come along. In 1972 Ferdinand Mount gave us *The Theatre of Politics*; and now Richard Sennett, in *The Fall of Public Man*, argues that theatricality is the essence of a "strong public life" and that one of the major problems of the modern politician is "how to arouse belief in one's appearance." It is a naive error, as Sennett appears to see it, to regard the credibility gap as a hiatus between public statements and public realities. The truth of the matter is that it occurs as a result of some failing in theatrical management. When that happens, public men fall.[1]

WHAT DOES ALL this mean? Of course it would be false to suggest that such disparate authors all talk about Life as Theatre in essentially similar ways. They do not. Whereas both Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman are happy enough simply to regard the dramatic metaphor as a useful way of describing the way things are, more boldly speculative men like Richard Sennett use it to prescribe how things ought to be. Nor are they all equally ambitious: whereas for Goffman the theatrical frame merely throws light on the ways of men, for Berger it illuminates the ways of God. But despite the very considerable ingenuity most

[1] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945) . . . Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) . . . Peter L. Berger, *The Precarious Vision* (1961); *Invitation to Sociology* (1963) . . . Ferdinand Mount, *The Theatre of Politics* (1972) . . . Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (1977). Herb Greer's discussion in these pages of what he called "the poisonous mixture of Theatre and Politics" ("The Twopenny Candle", ENCOUNTER, June 1978) addressed itself to the very ugly practical results of deliberately muddling the domains of Theatre and Life. While our arguments share certain points in common, and we clearly dislike some of the same things, here I am more narrowly concerned with those writers who have sought to dignify this confusion with an intellectual rationale.

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of this work displays, enough of it has a sufficiently strained and academic flavour to warrant treating it, at the very least, with some reserve. After all, ordinary experience recommends a pretty clear distinction between "acting" and "action", and the man in the street who wilfully ignores this distinction does so at some personal risk. Vernacular images of the theatre are usually derisive. Is it merely naivety which leads the average citizen to dismiss some politicians as "mere actors" and the more histrionic of parliamentary proceedings as "mere charades"? If these popular intuitions are to be set aside, plain men may fairly ask why.

THIS QUESTION RAPIDLY LEADS beyond merely academic fashions and usages. Down at the theatre there have been plenty of changes too. The elderly among us have lived to see "drama critics" (who wrote about drama with a good deal of astringency) evolving steadily backwards into "theatre critics" (who write about whatever happens in theatres); and lately there have been signs that the theatre critics' time has also come. Manifestations of assorted ethnographic bizarrerie[2] suggest that the next generation of reviewers will need to be men of anthropological rather than literary tastes, able and willing to write about performances of "rituals" and "ceremonies" (and whose criticism, presumably, will attend to such matters as ritual exactitude and degrees of ceremonial splendour). And the interesting thing about this linear regression back down the path from drama to ritual, and about the theatrical troupes now dancing down that path, is that they too are inspired by a vision of Society as "Theatre", by a desire to obliterate the boundary between art and life.

If the yearning for ritual involved only a taste for wordless mummery then perhaps it could be regarded as just another symptom of Steiner's Silence. But the silence embraced is cerebral, not verbal; the atavism more sinister. Drama, after all, is the art form of an articulate open society *par excellence*. It flourishes where even the deepest and most painful issues are open to enquiry, argument, debate. In ritualised society such enquiry is foreclosed, such argument forbidden, such debate impossible. And while the anthropological spectrum of ritual is broad and varied enough to include a good deal of emotionality and conflict, this is allowed public expression only on condition that the deepest and most sensitive social assumptions remain untouched.

The current enthusiasm for ritual has been both alarming and mystifying. While there is little in what he says which might reduce our alarm, we are all indebted to the writings of Richard Schechner for ominously clarifying much that once seemed strange. A Professor of Drama at New York University's School of the Arts, a well-known director, and a veteran pioneer of trends, Schechner has spent a good deal of his time searching for elixirs to revitalise the exhausted theatre of the West. He was an early enthusiast for "The Living Theatre" and has written widely about Happenings, Environments, and so on. Then in 1972 he undertook a journey to the Kurumugl, high in the mountains of New Guinea; and it was in this rarefied atmosphere that he had a vision of what drama ideally might be—a complex of rituals integrating social life. He came to understand and to share the love of the Kurumugl for their pigs. He even witnessed a pig festival and saw whole herds of desperate swine massacred and devoured.

Anyone who has seen this sort of thing will tell you that it leaves a powerful impression; and there seems little doubt that Professor Schechner was powerfully impressed. Writing about it afterwards (and rather breathlessly using the present tense, perhaps for dramatic effect), he tells us that "the sight and smell of so much meat and blood excites the people, including me", goes on excitedly to foresee the coming of what he calls "automation age tribalism", and confidently advises us to prepare for that long-awaited instauration, "the advent of holism in contemporary society."[3]

NOW THERE IS OBVIOUSLY a large difference between the delicious spectacle of our New York professor revelling in the theatre of communitarian gore, and the ironic detachment of Jacques in the Forest of Arden. For Jacques the World as Drama represented *fate*: for Schechner a world of ritualised social activity represents a wholly desirable *state*. And turning to the altogether more attractive presentation of *The Theatre of Politics* one might reasonably expect an even greater contrast between the Dionysian ecstasies of Schechner and the more Apollonian views of Ferdinand Mount. As one picks up the book one wonders what the ENCOUNTER author of "The Recovery of Civility"[4] would have had to say about that shambles on the far-off mountain top, confident that a man with an elective affinity for Edmund Burke would be unlikely to derive much political inspiration from the event.

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[2] See "Ik and Ethnic", by John Weightman, ENCOUNTER, April 1976.

[3] Richard Schechner, "From Ritual to Theatre and Back", *Educational Theatre Journal* (December 1974), pp. 457, 462–63.

[4] Ferdinand Mount, "The Recovery of Civility", ENCOUNTER, July 1973.

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But how wrong can one be? For all I know he might easily have enjoyed the pig festival, since the account he gives of communitarian goings-on in Paris in 1971, although somewhat intellectualised and distant, is never less than appreciative. After quoting a report of a production of Ariane Mnouchkine's *1789, The French Revolution, Year One*, in which "When they reached the episode of the Bastille, they stopped the performance and the evening became one huge *bal musette*, the multifarious crowd singing and dancing through the night . . .", he offers the following political interpretation:

> "The theatre is transformed into the political convention hall. The immersion of the audience in the dramatic process may not be complete; the actors are still distinguished by their costumes and their speaking of lines. Yet it is the degree to which the audience feels immersed which is the production's avowed criterion of success. In so far as the audience retains its detachment and its freedom to criticise either the technique of the production or the ideas propounded in it, the production has failed."[5]

There is very little evidence that Mount wants to see "audience immersion" replace the existing procedures at Westminster, and even less that he would like to convert parliament into some sort of "holistic" festival, swinish or other. Quite the contrary. But this only makes the inevitable questions all the more exigent. Why does he feel this particular illustration helps his argument? Has there been a misunderstanding? Is it a case of misapplied topicality? Or does this curious example simply demonstrate the fatal tendency of the dramatic metaphor to lead even the most judicious authors somewhat astray?

For all its discursiveness, the main argument of *The Theatre of Politics* is simple enough. Successful politics requires talk, above all the sort of talk between citizens and their representatives which each party clearly understands. But in the unsuccessful political talk so prevalent today this sort of thing is lacking. Speeches do not connect; the hungry flock looks up and is not fed. Therefore—and who could disagree?—the standard of political conversation needs to be improved. If this sounds familiar, it is. Page after page of *The Theatre of Politics*, for all its engaging vigour and attractive erudition, irresistibly reminds one of the journalistic agonising over the "problems" of Johnsonian politics in the 1960s—problems of communication and credibility which, it was dimly hoped, could be solved by something called "meaningful dialogue."

MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE is in fact what *The Theatre of Politics* is all about. And "dialogue" itself is a word which crops up everywhere. Indeed, wherever the most natural and obvious word would be *talk*, or *speech*, or *address*, or *exhortation*, or *argument*—what we find instead is "dialogue." A somewhat bizarre example occurs in the course of an extended discussion of Harold Macmillan's career which describes his apparent failure to communicate with the public. Mount comments:

> "Gielgud could make the gallery hear every syllable of *Principia Mathematica*, but he could not make them understand, let alone applaud it. Yet a successful political dialogue must do both. For political dialogue is persuasion."

Perhaps it is. What is rather less clear is why the author considers "dialogue" the right word to use. Supposing that the gallery were filled with mathematicians and philosophers then Gielgud would have at least a fighting chance of making his audience understand, whether or not they could be induced to applaud. But how would this fact transform an eloquent expository discourse into a dialogue? If *dialogue* seems the appropriate term to Mount, one is forced to conclude that this must be because, like others who have adopted the dramatic metaphor, he finds himself committed to an extended vocabulary radiating out from the notion of "Life as Theatre"—act, actor, stage, dialogue, etc.—and because he is unwilling to acknowledge the fact that some of these terms are decidedly less helpful than others.

The notion of stage dialogue is not helpful. Nor is it apt. In ordinary parlance the sort of talk which takes place on a stage contains dialogues in which actors speak to actors, and it is for this reason the antithesis of that articulate sharing of views between representatives and audiences which Mount evidently wishes to promote. Of course you can say if you like that the playwright "addresses" his audience; or that the play "speaks" to our condition; or that the public knows very well what both playwright and players are "saying." But if you want to use the term "dialogue" then the inconvenient fact must be faced that it has little to do with the relation of actors and audiences.

Indeed it is one of the more endearing features of dialogues upon the stage that they possess the hermetic exclusiveness of symbols, their threats and promises being forever sealed off behind the footlights and the proscenium arch. This shouldn't make us sad: it is as it should be. The proscenium arch marks a division of discourse which corresponds to the division of our institutional life. It is the unambiguous clarity of this division which protects the privacy of playgoers, which

[5] Ferdinand Mount, *The Theatre of Politics*, p. 58.

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mercifully guarantees the drama as a civilised form of persuasion rather than yet another exercise in public cajolery or coercion, and which ensures that even when a playwright doggedly includes all the most threatening and painful and offensive material he can lay his hands on, his play will still find an audience.

IF THIS ACCOUNT OF DRAMA as demarcated and separate is correct then the dramatic metaphor is quite unsuited to Mount's purposes—and on page 56 he admits as much. Whereas healthy political characters talk with their electoral audiences, the characters in stage dramas are incurably aloof. They

> "do not converse with us directly and intimately. They are sealed off in the world that the author has created for them. They are distanced from us."

They are indeed: and since the abridgment of political distance is Mount's chief aim, the figurative portrayal of politics as drama can only be preserved by elastically enlarging the metaphor to include virtually anything that happens under a theatre roof, and in the course of this operation we find that it is to this loosely inclusive theatrical domain that "our subject, the political drama" belongs.

THE DISCONCERTINGLY APPRECIATIVE reference to Rousseauistic manifestations in *The Theatre of Politics* shows that the inherent irrationalism of the dramatic metaphor, politically applied, pulls in two opposite directions. Whereas *radical* irrationalism celebrates the excitement of collectivities raising their consciousness on their own petards, *conservative* irrationalism characteristically celebrates an unquestioning acquiescence in forms and rituals. Occasionally—and one feels that something like this is going on in both Richard Sennett and Peter Berger—the two appear to be ingeniously mixed for tactical purposes. But in Sennett's case it would seem to be the irrationalism of forms and rites which is most deeply and most sincerely admired.

"It would seem" is about as much as one can safely say about *The Fall of Public Man* since a good deal of the book is obscure. But despite the muddle of his ideas, Sennett does seem to have a clearer understanding than Mount of the fact that the dramatic metaphor most naturally lends itself to exclusiveness, separation, and distance. A defence of spectacle in these terms was provided by Bagehot in his discussion of the aristocracy:

> "The English people [Bagehot wrote] defer to what we may call the theatrical show of society. A certain state passes before them; a certain pomp of great men; a certain spectacle of beautiful women; a wonderful scene of wealth and enjoyment is displayed, and they are coerced by it. Their imagination is bowed down; they feel they are not equal to the life which is revealed to them. . . . Courtiers can do what others cannot. A common man may as well try to rival the actors on the stage in their acting, as the aristocracy in *their* acting. The higher world, as it looks from without, is a stage on which the actors walk their parts much better than the spectators can."[6]

This passage is not used by Sennett, and Bagehot's name does not even appear in the index—which in any case treats only the second part of the book. But I believe that it expresses some of Sennett's ideas more clearly than the author does himself. To be sure, a number of very different references catch the eye, tantalising allusions to Karl Marx, Capitalism, and Commodity Fetishism, which somehow convey the impression that the author would like *The Fall of Public Man* to be received politely in progressive circles. But this seems a very unlikely prospect. The whole tenor of his argument works against it. Discussing what he calls "public relations" (in contrast to private relations) which appear to be essentially political relations, he writes:

> "Playacting in the form of manners, conventions, and ritual gestures is the very stuff out of which public relations are formed and from which public relations derive their emotional meaning."

And when he goes on to define the specific problem of contemporary politics as the theatrical "one of audience—specifically, how to arouse belief in one's appearance", then the relevant authority for such mystification would certainly seem to be Bagehot rather than Marx.

IN A CURIOUS WAY *The Theatre of Politics* and *The Fall of Public Man* complement each other—at least in the light they throw on the problems of the dramatic metaphor. Mount has a good deal of trouble making it fit his material. But at least his motives are honourable. He believes in the substance of political discourse, in actors who really mean what they say. On the other hand, Sennett has no trouble at all with the metaphor; and the reason seems to be that he is only interested in the forms of political discourse, in

[6] Walter Bagehot, *Collected Works* (ed. Norman St. John-Stevas, 1965), vol. V, p. 379.

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actors who are really at play.[7] The contrast is striking, and one begins to suspect that such very different readings from a common figurative source derive from the ineradicable ambiguities of the words "act" and "actor", a suspicion which Kenneth Burke's statement on this matter appears to confirm.

Kenneth Burke's thought may be approached either through the ten or more volumes of his collected works or through the six brief pages he wrote for a recent entry in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. The first is mandatory for literary scholars. The second is more useful here.[8] "The dramatistic approach is implicit in the key term 'act'", he writes (only seven lines into his encyclopaedia entry and with an emphasis that is not to be mistaken). "'Act' is thus a terministic center from which many related considerations can be shown to 'radiate', as though it were a 'god-term' from which a whole universe of terms is derived." A little later he points out that other people too have found the word "act" a useful starting point. Talcott Parsons "has analytically unfolded, for sociological purposes, much the same set of terministic functions that is here being called dramatistic (owing to their nature as implied in the idea of an 'act')."

But what does he mean by "the idea of an 'act'"? And why should we believe that there is only one such idea? Surely the word "act" is located in two "terministic centers", two separate semantic foci radiating two separate universes of terms. One of them leads in through the stage door and up into the world of theatrical business and "acting." The other leads out into the world of workaday business and "action." And it makes quite a lot of difference which of these starting points you choose—as Talcott Parsons knew very well when he called his book *The Structure of Social Action*. The difference between these universes lies in the directness, power, and immediacy of the consequences they trail. When "acting" has any consequences at all these are indirect and lie in the exclusive realm of symbolic communication. The contrasting consequences of "action" lie in the inclusive world of our institutional life, a world underwritten by law.

OF COURSE IT IS laughably solecistic even to pronounce the word "law" in the context of a theatrical/phenomenological account of how society works. It is virtually a prerequisite in discussions of Life as Theatre that law be treated as if it didn't even exist. This is consistent with an emphasis on the ephemeral and inconsequential in social relations. It might be said that law ensures *the consequentiality of action* in exactly the same way that the proscenium arch guarantees *the inconsequentiality of acting*. Action and the consequences it trails always point towards the continuity of institutional forms, pressures, and constraints. Whereas acting—the arm of the ambiguity which appeals so strongly to those who select the dramatic metaphor—usually consists of the evasive negation of institutions and a denial of the continuities they represent.

NO ONE HAS DOCUMENTED the histrionic twists and turns of evasive negation more thoroughly than Erving Goffman, and such nice discriminations are found in his recent book, *Frame Analysis*,[9] such a remarkable sensitivity to the meanings of onstage and offstage, and of actors, audiences, and interactions, that one has forcefully to remind oneself that when he first proposed a theatrical analysis of daily life it was in a disarmingly off-hand way. "The claim that all the world's a stage", he wrote in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*,

> "is sufficiently commonplace for readers to be familiar with its limitations and tolerant of its presentation, knowing that at any time they will easily be able to demonstrate to themselves that it is not to be taken too seriously."

How could one object to that? Our erudition is flattered, our tolerance and sense of humour appealed to. It seems only sensible to acquiesce as the author tells us that "the self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect. . . ."

Goffman himself was careful to speak of the self "as" a performed character and at least to leave open the possibility of another self which was not. His more enthusiastic disciples have been less scrupulous. One of them tells us that "a person's individuality is not something that is brought" to social situations, and goes on categorically to assert that "people do not have

[7] Sennett, p. 315. "It is unusual for a society to distrust ritual or ritualized gesture, unusual for a society to see formal behavior as inauthentic. The childhood energies of play are in most societies continued and enriched as ritual, usually in the service of religion. Secular, advanced capitalist society does not call upon, but rather works against, these energies."

[8] Kenneth Burke, "Dramatism", *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1968), vol. 7, pp. 445–452. For his original extended treatment of the "dramatistic" scheme see his *A Grammar of Motives*.

[9] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis* (1974).

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selves that are activated or reflected" by society. According to another writer, the true nature of "the self is basically a system of language and ideas that is in a constant state of modification as a person interacts with others. . . . Manipulation is the key to individuality", and the essential nature of individuality is something instrumental, kaleidoscopic, and brief.[10]

The implications of the self "as a system of language" everlastingly modified by "interaction" are intriguing. Can such a self truly be said to exist in a linguistic universe of one speaker? And how would we know? At all events, these revelations plainly spell doom for the resistant self, the obdurate self, the "own self" discussed by Lionel Trilling,[11] and the Solzhenitsyns of the world should be promptly advised. More seriously, it appears that the result of applying the dramatic metaphor to social psychology is a doctrinaire ephemeralisation of the self. Personal identity is equated with role-playing; and in a world made entirely of roles there can be no selves.

AS JACQUES WOULD HAVE BEEN the first to admit, it is hard to think or talk about men in this way without adopting, sometimes unconsciously, an ironic tone. And one of the more piquant features of Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) is its irony and humour. We read of London's chimney sweeps and the white lab coats they affect, an affectation designed (so Goffman tells us) to provide their clients "with an understanding that the delicate tasks performed by these persons will be performed in . . . a clinical, confidential manner." And we smile with the author as he tells us about role-players who suddenly get carried away by their own performance: "This intricate manoeuvre of self-delusion constantly occurs; psychoanalysts have provided us with beautiful field data of this kind, under the headings of repression and dissociation. . . ."

But "beautiful data on dissociation" was not the sort of phrase or attitude the 1960s took kindly to. Madness was to be no laughing matter; and, in some quarters, delusion and dissociation were soon to be transformed from aberrations into signs of quasi-divinity. Anticipating this trend, Goffman's 1961 book *Asylums* shows a marked shift in both the dramaturgical account of the self and in the author's moral viewpoint. Whereas his attitude toward the little dramas of civil life was amused and ironic, the same sort of thing in a "total institution" finds him stony-faced, and his language is downright indignant. Loss of face is no longer a joke; it's a defacement. We are told that a person's clothes are an "identity kit" and that these have a "special relation to self." Indeed, it could be argued that whereas Goffman's first book was about the self and its *presentation*, his subsequent *Asylums* is about *the preservation of self.*

All of which contradicts his earlier view. In his first book he had gone out of his way to stress that the self is "not an organic thing", that it was only a dramatic effect, that persons provide bodies "on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time." Now all is changed. "Total institutions" deface and mortify the self. In such places a person's body, thoughts, and even some possessions are "territories of the self" which are "violated . . . invaded . . . profaned." This is a far cry from the self as merely a suit of clothes hanging on a peg. After all, you can't mortify a rain-coat or humiliate a shoe.

Goffman ignores the implications of this change in attitude. In a meditative aside on the question of head-shaving and similar "mortifications" he remarks:

> ". . . according to the general expressive idiom of our society, having one's head shaved is easily perceived as a curtailment of the self, but while this mortification may enrage a mental patient, it may please a monk."

Translated, I suppose what he's saying here is that one man's face is another man's person. But if true, this relativistic axiom takes the debate right out of the realm in which the moral language of violation, invasion and profanation makes any sense. If one man's violation is another's ecstasy —why get worked up about it? All that's appropriate is a relativistic shoulder-shrug and an anthropological smile.

THE RELATIVISTIC POTENTIAL of the dramatic metaphor is, to some thinkers, its most appealing attribute. One play is as good as another—Pig Festivals or *The Marriage of Figaro*, who cares?—and though performances may vary it is pointless to compare scenarios. The scenarios are essentially meaningless, and only a dull fellow would try to compare and to evaluate meaningless things. The blithely unphilosophic nature of most anthropologists has generally protected them from considering such matters, but sociologists of European background see more clearly what's at stake. Few have gone further than Peter L. Berger in exploiting the relativistic possibilities of *theatrum mundi.*

[10] Dennis Brisset and Charles Edgley, *Life as Theater* (1974), p. 56.

[11] Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Harvard University Press (1971).

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He prefers Erasmus instead of Shakespeare for his text.

> "What else [asked the author of *The Praise of Folly*] is the whole life of mortals but a sort of comedy, in which the various actors, disguised by various costumes and masks, walk on and play each one his part . . . ?"

Taken as a programme for research, "the whole of life" encourages a challengingly ambitious approach; and it is a challenge which Berger clearly welcomes. What has to be done, he declares, is to push the dramatic vision well beyond the provincial academic limits of "role theory" and its psychological minutiae. First it must be made to embrace the Sociology of Knowledge; then, more curiously, what might be called the theology of knowledge as well.

The Sociology of Knowledge and the Dramatic Metaphor were made for one another. Both celebrate a holistic consensus. According to the Sociology of Knowledge the force of social expectations determines what is true; according to the dramatic metaphor the force of these same expectations determines what we do. *Ergo*, knowledge and truth are always pragmatically determined by social needs. For anyone slow to draw the inevitable conclusions, Berger provides an account of the fate of American prisoners of war in Chinese Communist hands (the book in question appeared in 1961). Readers of Bao Ruo-Wang's report of his years in Mao's prisons are bound to find it instructive:

> "It has been for quite some time a commonplace of social psychology that not only behaviour and emotions but cognitive processes as well are subject to group influence. . . .
>
> It is presumably a root fact of social existence that most men tend to think as their fellows do. This tendency acts as a powerful psychological instrument of social control, bringing back into line the individual whose thinking deviates from the norms set by the group. How far this tendency can go has been shown by the evidence concerning Communist 'brain-washing' techniques in recent years. . . .
>
> Thus, for example, in the case of American prisoners of war brain-washed by the Chinese Communists, it now becomes possible not only to analyse the psychological processes inducing some remarkable conversions to the captor's points of view, but to show how these processes relate the individuals in question to specific social worlds. In this particular example the sociology of knowledge implications are particularly obvious, since the conversion now involves a total different perspective on the political scene."

That's all there is: a different perspective. And from each perspective the world is contemplated with a blank amoral stare. One gets the distinct impression that *perspectivitis* is to the moral viewpoint what conjunctivitis is to the eye itself—gravely disabling. But to Berger it is somehow enriching.

> "Our consideration of sociology of knowledge . . . has added another dimension. We now see our actors once more upon the stage, playing their various roles. But now we see a *Weltanschauung* dangling from the end of each role."[12]

Yet it is the *Weltanschauung* dangling from Peter Berger's exposition which is perhaps more revealing. In a fashion which has become more and more familiar in the decade-and-a-half since he wrote this book, science is assimilated to ideology, and philosophy to congenial fiction. Each are *merely perspectives* offering equally "valid" views of equally artificial stages and sets and décor. And when this theatrical "perspective" is used to provide the justification for a modern theology, the author's relativistic sociology really comes into its own. The gist of it is that man must somehow protect himself from terror—the terror of realising that beneath the firm reality of the everyday world there is only the darkness of ontological chaos, the black pit of meaninglessness. The fire of human thought does not illuminate this darkness. It only provides a comforting sensation of warmth. Science does not explain the nature of the pit. It only provides a reassuring "plausibility structure." There are many such plausibility structures (science is only one); and which you actually choose hardly matters.

THE THEOLOGICAL GLOSS on the sociology of knowledge in Berger's *A Rumour of Angels* (1970) is all the glossier for its apparent unawareness of the whole Karl Popper debate, for suggesting that no critique worth the name has ever been made of the Sociology of Knowledge, and for implying that the comparative testability of propositions is an illusion. In the chapter "Relativizing the Relativizers" we are confidently informed that

> "when everything has been subsumed under the relativizing categories in question (those of history, of the sociology of knowledge, or what-have-you), the question of truth reasserts itself in almost pristine simplicity."[13]

[12] Peter L. Berger, *The Precarious Vision*, pp. 48, 57–8.

[13] Peter L. Berger, *A Rumour of Angels* p. 57. A useful critique of Berger's epistemology can be found in "The Disembodied Dialectic" by Donald L. Carveth, *Theory and Society* (Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring 1977).

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On the contrary, the question does not reassert itself. It cannot even sensibly be asked, since from the premises of his argument it follows that all questions about truth or falsehood are meaningless.

The more one reads of this book the more the suspicion grows upon one that what is being enacted is a scene from the Philosophy of the Absurd. On page 64 Hegel and Marx enter (from right and left stage respectively), bow, and applaud each other. It seems that they have no important differences. And even when Marx stands on his head and walks around on his hands their mutual congratulations continue. Metaphysically speaking, it doesn't matter which way up anybody is.

> "It is logically possible [writes Berger] that *both* [the Hegelian and Marxian] perspectives may coexist, each within its particular frame of reference. . . . The logic of the first perspective does not preclude the possibility of the latter."

Perhaps, though I'm not sure that logic has much to do with it. Anyway, why stop with Hegel and Marx? Why not enlarge one's cast of characters to include Mother Goose, Old Uncle Tom Cobbleigh, the festive *Weltanschauung* of the Kurumugl, et al.? Certainly there is nothing in the free-wheeling "logic of perspectives" to forbid it. And under the theatrical aspect of Life as Play, where anything goes, surely we are entitled to expect a modicum of philosophical entertainment in exchange for surrendering everything else?

FROM THE CLOUDY HEIGHTS of central New Guinea one can see two climbers toiling up the slopes below. One of them, rather garishly dressed, appears to be a theatrical personality from New York. He is weary of what the West calls drama. It is so divisive, so alienating, so intolerably exclusive! It does almost nothing to foster that warm sense of unanimity which distinguishes the communitarian enterprise. In contrast, tribal rituals heal, seal, and unify. And it doesn't really matter what the ritual consists of, or what it celebrates, or what its participants believe. Almost any old belief will do. The important thing is participation. When you take part you always feel so much better.

The other climber agrees. It is all very well, he says, for sociologists and others to comprehend the cosmos as a kind of vast, meaningless drama. But for most men the drama of life is much too dramatic, too full of frightening surprises. In order to provide a surprise-free world they must be protected by "plausibility structures" of irrational belief. And it doesn't much matter what kind of plausibility you choose. Almost anything at all will do. As for ritual, says the philosopher—raising his voice a little so that he can be heard above the squealing of pigs being roped and tied for slaughter—surely rituals are perfectly sensible ways of providing reassurance in a world in which "all human societies and their institutions are, at their root, a barrier against terror. . . ."

But there is no reply. The man of the theatre, with feathers in his hair, has already joined the tribal dance.

Skeleton

Ubiquitous as bone, the word,
At six or eight, is "skellington."
They hear it so, learn later to
Discriminate. They also write
Of flying "brids", and "littel grils":
Transpose, almost to rule.
Along
The nerves the messages run true,
In time. The birds come down to earth.
The girls have grown. Somewhere, still waits,
However spelt, the skellington.

John Loveday

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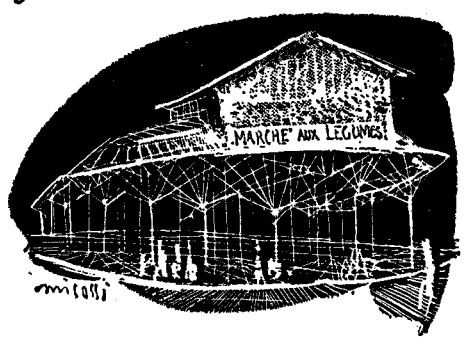
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from France

Proudhon is Dead

By Olivier Todd



SOME of the over-forty-year-olds in France today, mainly city folk, are thrashing over the vexed question: "Was I right to buy my apartment (or my house)? . . ." Similarly younger people are soberly asking themselves which is better for them: renting or buying. All are in fact raising the question of private ownership of accommodation; it is one which affects their daily life. It interests them far more—oh how much more!—than that of "the means of production." Yet during the recent election campaign the question was ignored by political circles.

In all developed countries and under all economic systems the population boom and rapid expansion have produced a housing crisis —in France, but also in countries with a more acute social conscience such as Sweden. Most Frenchmen sense or know that this crisis is a permanency in the so-called socialist countries where, in principle, "the right to be housed" is guaranteed as is "the right to work." Over-crowding in a shortage of accommodation is a characteristic of Eastern Europe.

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE to balance the successes of the so-called socialist system of building and renting against the capitalist system of private purchase? Vistors to Eastern Europe are told that rents are "low." In view of the number of square feet available to each occupant anything else would be a scandal. A promise of low rents in non-existent dwellings is like guaranteeing the end of an epidemic *if* drugs unobtainable on the market were available. In France the number of *militants de gauche* who have bought their house or flat during the last twenty-five years shows that they do not quite anticipate a solution of their problem from a complete State take-over of the building industry.

The French, whether rich or poor, are not anti the idea of private property. In the collective subconscious one is continually confronted with the nation of peasants obsessed by land, bricks and mortar. After all, under the Code Napoléon we were the first Continental nation in Europe to proclaim the sacrosanct nature of private property.

NOWADAYS property is no longer measured in terms of gold or the unchanging gold franc. The French obsession is with real estate. The harsh necessity of finding accommodation and the attractive (though arguable) notion that bricks and mortar never lose their value are cumulative factors; they turn an apartment or a house into a respectable acquisition even in the eyes of those who would hesitate to buy stocks and shares. The urge to buy, or the "property instinct" if you will, has rational and irrational roots, both equally respectable. The French, for all the *fraternité*, are not believers in the brotherhood of man. They are scandalously neglectful of old people; young people wonder gloomily whether they will be on the streets when the time for retirement comes. They doubt whether they will be able to continue paying the rent for decent accommodation. They can easily see themselves being driven out of the apartment they have lived in during their working years. They visualise themselves in the workhouse. Moreover, France is behindhand with old peoples' homes such as are to be found in the Scandinavian countries. Rehousing of the aged is an arguable system anyway; but there are still too many old people to be seen leading a wretched lonely existence in some "maid's room" and sometimes buying tins of dog food instead of meat.

Possession of an apartment, the certainty that in fifteen or twenty years' time one will no longer have to pay rent, is often equivalent to an assurance of long-term survival. On this subject no financial calculation can overcome the conviction of the averagely well-to-do that purchase of a house or apartment is a wise investment giving security in old age.

For emotional reasons too the French are investing in housing more than they did. The city-centre *bistro* life is becoming a subject confined to American *B*–films. Existence is becoming more private; people are withdrawing into or reverting to family life, turning "Nordic"

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around the television set in a place more comparable to "home" in the English sense. Fortunately the French are more inclined than they were to devote a sizeable portion of their budget *au logement*. The agencies are well aware of this; the current racket is to demand a rent equivalent to one quarter or one fifth of a prospective tenant's income.

As far as standard of accommodation is concerned, the low-income social class in France does not yet enjoy the comforts offered to, say, Norwegians. In numbers of rooms they are not yet on the level of the British or the West Germans. During the last twenty years these Frenchmen have begun to pitch their demands higher; they no longer want a "water closet" but a bathroom. Who would now dare to say, as they used to, "If you give the workers baths, they'll put coal in them", though some still say this about the immigrants of course.

The French are convinced that it is easier, cheaper and more practical to do one's own decorating and repairs on something one owns than to rely on the bureaucracy of some housing association or that mysterious personality, *le gérant d'immeubles*, the house manager. As far as maintenance is concerned a glance at some of the high-rise buildings of the *Hexagone* or those on the Karl Marx Allee in East Berlin proves that what in theory belongs to everybody in fact belongs to nobody. It is altogether regrettable but that's the way it is. Behind a "Dunroamin", a council flat, or a "high class" apartment, stands the problem of "the quality of life." It is all to the good that these purchasers of the future, now in revolt, should refuse to commit themselves "*sur plan*." The potential owner is a demanding consumer.

BEFORE THE LAST WAR the owner-occupier in France was the exception. In a few years the opposite will be true. In the 19th century Tocqueville summarised France as follows, "A society split in two: those who possess nothing, united in a common covetousness, and those who possess something, united in a common anguish. . . ." This is no longer the case as far as housing is concerned.

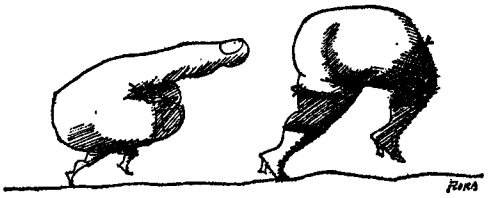
The urge to buy is not explicable solely by the scarcity of a reasonably priced rent market. Psychologically there are certain negative aspects to purchase. It implies a population of relative immobility, for initiative also implies an acceptance of movement.

Some people buy in order to rent to others. Are they taking a good long-term risk? With a potentially falling birth rate (which gives Michel Debré the shivers) reliance on housing, hoping for a big return on one's money, is a risky business. Perhaps we shall see the delightful old "*A louer*"—"To Let"—placards return to French doorposts and balconies.

Private property today is no longer a subject for fierce ideological confrontation. Here, in France, who would maintain that it is robbery? Proudhon, once immortal for saying, "*la propriété —c'est le vol*", is as dead as Marx.

A Philosopher at the Airport

Reception in Germany—By HERMANN LÜBBE



"WHAT a reception!" A foreign colleague, who had arrived in Germany by way of Frankfurt's new airport, was expressing his astonishment at our way of receiving guests there. How exactly? Everywhere as one comes through one is struck by prominent, garish invitations to visit the local sex-shops. I myself had never found this astonishing. Our country is teeming with sex-shops and other erotical establishments nowadays. That is why, I suppose, it makes less of an impression on us when we come into contact with this flourishing branch of business next to the composed customs officials of the *Zoll-Amt* in Germany than it must make on unemancipated citizens of less progressive countries. The next time I landed in Frankfurt, I kept my wide eyes open. It's all quite true. Even the luggage trolleys for the enormous distances of the Super-Airport are labelled exclusively with their advertising slogans. It looked as if we had reached the land of pornopromise.

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Since it is all, when you really get down to it, simply indescribable, I won't go into any further detail here. I hope it will not be misconstrued as a sly advertising gimmick if I recommend that everyone takes a look for themselves at the next opportunity—who knows, it may even help to improve *détente* and the new European consciousness.

An inspection of the goods on offer is, incidentally, in accordance with the formal practices of our retail trade, without obligation to buy. However, free film previews are not on offer. Those who all too seldom come to Frankfurt will not be denied the opportunity of fully informing themselves elsewhere at other branches of this prosperous expanding enterprise. The name of the firm is difficult to miss (in fact the most well-known German name there is, and what is more, graced with the dignity of the academic doctor's title).

IT IS THE ACADEMIC ASPECT of the matter which perhaps explains how that which previously remained hidden like pudenda in the harbour alleys and other out-of-the-way places now functions as a kind of German hallmark in the reception building of our largest airport (don't forget, the President of the *Bundesrepublik* himself took the trouble to open it). We are after all living in the free part of Germany; and it is of course by no means an article of faith among the masses, but rather a central theory of progressive academe, that only the sex-cultural revolution will make us truly free. The validity of this theory is undisputed among our intellectuals; and to be prudish is no longer a harmless, faintly comical quality, but a sure indicator of reactionary ideology.

What airport manager could still afford to scoff at the lucrative rents paid by sex boutiques simply because these boutiques refuse to con-

How "Happy" are the Germans?

Frankfurt

"CHANGES in the values of the working class" was the subject of a report presented by Professor Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann at a recent West German conference. Based on demoscopic research, her figures reflect a remarkable relationship between the increasing material "bourgeoisification" of the working class since World War II and the increasing spread of an unbourgeois "lower-class" mentality. They also show an interesting relationship between employee status, job dissatisfaction, and discontentment on the one hand and self-employment, freedom and happiness on the other.

Dr Noelle-Neumann offered the following statistics to illustrate the improvement in the material living standards of the West German working class: Refrigerators were owned by 5% in 1955 and 93% in 1974—cars by 31% in 1964 and over 60% in 1975. When questioned about their major problems, 51% answered "money troubles" in 1954 but only 26% in 1972. One person in eleven had "no worries at all" in 1954 as opposed to one in three in 1972. According to workers' own estimates, their leisure time increased by one whole hour between 1954 (2¾ hours) and 1973. 29% of workers took an annual holiday trip in 1960, 49% in 1974. The social security system expanded, and savings increased over the same period.

DESPITE THIS "BOURGEOISIFICATION", *middle-class values lost ground not only among the working class but also in the middle class itself. Dr Noelle-Neumann investigated this by putting questions about the aims of upbringing. "Thrift", "discipline", "modesty" and "courtesy" have suffered a perceptible and sometimes rapid decline in value; likewise respect for other people's property. Concepts such as "the ability to succeed" have gained ground; so have "tolerance and regard for other people's opinions." On the other hand, typically middle-class notions such as the view that "hard work pays", that "achievement connotes advancement" and "property merits respect", that recognition and education are things "worth striving for", have* not *been adopted by the working class.*

It was found instead that employed (and even self-employed) persons tended to follow the "proletarian" system of values, this being invariably more noticeable among the younger generation than the older. Nearly 40% of young workers aspired to "a life without work." 44% of the working class declared themselves "fully satisfied" with their jobs in 1962 compared with only 38% in 1972, and the difference—42% (1962) to 30% (1971)—was even more marked among the young. Despite a definite improvement in their personal standard of living, 51% believed in 1964 that there was "no equitable distribution of wealth" in the Federal Republic. In 1971, 62% of the working class took this view.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

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form to conventional old-fashioned ideas of reception-hall décor? He would have failed to recognise the signs of the times and would merely have demonstrated that he did not know that we are now really free.

ONE MUST ADMIT that revolutionaries, versed in theoretical sexual politics, do not recognise the sex-shops as the realisation of their own liberation programme. On the contrary, they despise them as profit-orientated organisations designed to satisfy an *Ersatz* bourgeois need which will disappear when the ideal of authentic liberation has been achieved. In all fairness, airport managers and other mere pragmatists are not obliged to maintain such utopian ideals. They can—in fact they must—be practical in the "transitional" period and, if need be, even accept a kind of sexological empiricism. For this purpose, as we know, there are now research institutes in German universities (and lectures to go with them) from which we hear, for example, that a plethora of pornography and an unrepressed market for its gear and equipment can only favourably influence (i.e. reduce) the statistics of sex offences. That really does put the sex-shops in a progressive light; and in the future, I suppose, their clients will earn society's gratitude for serving themselves here instead of going out to molest unwilling parties.

So far, so good. But to guarantee this beneficial effect is it really necessary, and is it really proven by the crime statistics out there at Frankfurt airport, that of all the imaginable services we could offer to arriving guests, this should be the first? Moreover, shouldn't those who do find such stimulation helpful in their lives have the opportunity to follow it up, to follow through, just around the corner so to speak? Otherwise, or so the layman imagines at least, that which is supposed to serve psycho-hygienic social comfort will in fact only reinforce frustration. Up until now, as far as I could see, the local red lights have still only been used for the control of aircraft approaches.

I AM AFRAID that the attempt to provide a progressive apology for Frankfurt Airport-Sex is inadequate. The shops are unfortunately misplaced—if for no other reason than because of their missing infrastructure.

In the final instance, freedom is the freedom to choose other places as alternatives to places that are unacceptable. In this case that means: as free citizens and guests we must demand a tolerable alternative to our sex-crazed international airport when travelling to the *Goethe-Stadt*, Frankfurt-am-Main. After all, if such an alternative were to be offered to the rail-user, then in front of the *Hauptbahnhof* in Frankfurt he would run right into the same great new German freedom in all its potency (and this time with full infrastructure).

I sometimes wonder how the Government manages to welcome prominent guests at Germany's most important junction without alienating them by unsolicited sex-market offers. Sex may play a role in diplomatic affairs, but porn doesn't begin on the red carpet and erotica is not yet on the conference agenda. Will we soon be forcing upon the eyes of the traditionalist Tory lady who now leads the British Conservative Party the special offer of daring black-leather lingerie which is centrally displayed at the Frankfurt international airport? Is there no fear of a scandal when welcoming the stern President of the Women's League? And how is it that our own much-travelled Lady Ministers of the West European countries accept it? Why, when confronted with the porno-parade, don't their women's-lib impulses take unrepressed free rein? I suspect that the answer is they are VIPs, and their routes to and from the aircraft are along special sex-free routes. Let us not begrudge them their porno-less Potemkin villages. But it would be nice if my colleagues from Zurich, or even from Moscow, in fact all normally endowed men and women from abroad, could also share these privileges. I cannot for the life of me explain to them why the first and last thing they receive on the main route to and from Germany is an invitation to browse in a sex-shop, even if Goethe did once say, "Enough of words, let me at long last see acts. . . ."

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Garlands of Erudition

On Critics, Words & Opera—PETER PORTER

SOME YEARS AGO, at a not especially raffish party, I found myself being introduced to a fairly stout but attractive girl, who was necking with a man on a sofa. I did not want to intrude, but my hostess thought I should meet the girl as she was an opera singer and I am an opera devotee. When I heard her name I recognised her immediately as the highly personable Susanna of the performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro* I had seen two nights previously. She had looked slimmer on the stage. I told her how much I admired her performance and, warming to my role, I began to develop some of my pet theories about opera and its relationship to drama, literature and painting. She made polite replies and I failed to notice that her partner went out of the room. Eventually, as I was developing an especially ingenious argument, she interrupted me, saying, "Excuse me, this is very interesting, but I came here to get laid"—and left the room in pursuit of the man she'd been with on the sofa.

I relate this story for a purpose. Opera, for all of its attractions as either the modern equivalent of Greek Drama or as "*Gesamtkunstwerk*", and despite the temptations it offers to literary music-lovers to follow the further reaches of the higher criticism, is rooted in an almost garlicky physicality. Tenors really do flop to their knees and kiss holy pictures before storming on to the stage in *Aida*, and sopranos, roped in furs, eat gigantic meals after performances, and entertain lovers in opulent hotel suites.

More important than these jokey parodies of the behaviour of operatic performers is the heavy unreality of the conventions of the art itself. No matter how subtle the extensions of opera in the minds of score-readers and listeners, it remains an art of large gestures, physical domination and strong emotions. It is a salutary experience for opera lovers to go on to a stage and try to imagine the experience of singing and acting in such wide spaces in frequently elaborate costumes, with an orchestra between you and your audience. It must seem more like taking part in an army tattoo than like playing a Bach fugue in your study. I also believe that this corporeal reality extends beyond singers, producers and conductors into the world of composers—Mozart and Wagner being affected by it as much as Bizet and Puccini.

There is therefore a paradox to contend with when writing about opera. Part of oneself (the part which tends to idealise loved works of art and which is more at home with scores and records than in the theatre) recognises opera as the most complex and dream-like of autonomous works of art. But another part is drawn to the tear-drenched and excessive, to the wallowing and the canary-fancying. I suspect that men of letters, being somewhat ashamed of the appeal made to their senses by the irrational and erotic elements in opera, prepare feats of paradoxical criticism to justify a taste their purely literary peers might otherwise hold against them. It is not simply that opera has dramatic texts which make comment easier—songs and cantatas have these also but do not attract literary commentators to anything like the same extent—but that its wide public and sensual ambience make the intellectualising of its processes a doubly attractive challenge. It is the only large form in music which can be made over into literature almost intact.

When W. H. Auden returned to the Christian communion in America in the '40s, he also, under tutelage of the far-from-Christian Chester Kallman, took up opera, declaring it to be for our age what Athenian drama was for the Greeks. Auden had always loved music, and in the '30s was prepared to interest himself in lieder (Wolf's *Ganymed* gets a plug in *Letter to Lord Byron*) and in keyboard music. After his conversion to opera, he never referred to absolute music in his poetry or his criticism again. His record notes to *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci* were rightly described by one commentator as the higher criticism at its most pretentious (though he failed to point out that, even so, they were more worth reading than most of the stuff which passes

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for analysis in concert programmes and on record sleeves). Auden came to believe that opera was the last refuge of the high style in contemporary art, though none of his collaborations with composers could properly be described that way, even *The Rake's Progress*. Looking at what literary men make of opera, one is tempted to allege that they do not love music as such, but rather the opportunities it offers them to steal a march on their purely verbal colleagues in the preparation of audacious exegetical texts. Too often there is a camp flavour to their enthusiasm for Wagner, and even more so when their favourite is a generally discredited composer such as Gounod. Their tone, on occasions, can be that of cinéastes raving about old Randolph Scott movies.

DESPITE ALL THIS, I believe that opera is the finest and most generously proportioned of the major arts of mankind. I only wish I liked more of what its admirers write about it, or that I knew how to comment upon it in ways not utterly supererogatory. It seems as pointless to offer up garlands of irrelevant erudition as it is simply to describe musical and psychological action. Of the three literary men whose books I am reviewing, Peter Conrad writes the first sort of study (though with some highly interesting results as I hope to make plain) and Messrs Schmidgall and Swanston the second. Despite the presence of music type examples in Mr Schmidgall's book, *Literature as Opera*,[1] his is the least original and least musical of the three studies. Its title is misleading. Mr Schmidgall comments on twelve operas which are directly derived from already existing literary works, not all of them masterpieces. But he never shows us literature turning into opera, contenting himself with noting similarities to and differences from the originals.

His is a big book but the impression it leaves is a sketchy one. His opening chapter on the basic principles of operatic structure is short and there is no examination of the difference between a libretto written sui generis and one adapted from some more extended work, such as a play or a novel. Before one can relate operas derived from literary works to their originals one must have a firm command of the conventions of libretto-writing at one's finger-tips. Brevità is the essence of a libretto, but fixed forms, rhymes, traditional terminology, recitative, etc., must all be accounted for. An opera made from some episodes of a narrative poem, such as Handel's *Ariodante*, *Orlando* and *Alcina*, all derived from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, is a very different sort of adaptation to one taken from a novel, whether at a time of greater observance of convention, as with Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, or in a more free-ranging modern fashion, with Britten's *Death in Venice*. Not even the Metastasian libretto is an absolute form: each example will have its irregularities.

YET THE PREVAILING modes of libretti have changed so much over the years that comparisons become almost meaningless. Sometimes I think the real demarcation in opera lies between solo-voice dominated operas, and ensemble operas. Handel's *Orlando*, though it has choruses, ballet music and duets, has more in common with *Parsifal* than it has with *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The "exit aria"—indeed the da capo aria in general—lives on in 19th- and 20th-century opera. Tatiana's Letter Scene from *Eugene Onegin* and the whole of Schoenberg's *Erwartung* are descendants of such large-gestured solos. It is sad, therefore, that Mr Schmidgall takes the easy way out and selects favourite operas and simply talks about them and their literary models. What was wanted was a real interpretation of his title—how books are, in some ways, analagous to pieces of music, and how the operatic composer senses where music lies in a story, a play or a poem, and what resources he has at his disposal to carry his impulse into the lyric theatre.

There are two moments when Mr Schmidgall tackles his theme directly—in his checking of the libretti of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Eugene Onegin* against Beaumarchais' and Pushkin's original works. The Figaro examination is a disappointment, as he contents himself with observing Da Ponte's skilful notching up of Beaumarchais' themes and the few substitutes he had to make to tone down the level of social criticism. The real glory of *Figaro* is its ensembles and the true measure of Da Ponte's genius is his provision of so many of them. People do not speak at the same time in plays, but they have to in operas. The librettist of genius keeps his action going and his themes clear, and, traditionally, he lets his text become increasingly complex. And he does it all in rhymed verse.

When Mr Schmidgall examines the finale of Act 2 of *Figaro*, he draws a nice diagram showing Mozart's alternation of allegro and andante numbers, and he shows how Da Ponte follows the action of the play, but he fails to illuminate the miracle of exposition which this finale amounts to. Some consideration of the depth and autonomy of Mozart's and Beaumarchais' masterpieces is needed. Da Ponte's "numbers" cannot be compared with Beaumarchais' speeches. Literature does not go into opera—at least in

[1] *Literature as Opera*. By GARY SCHMIDGALL. Oxford University Press, $15.00, £6.95.

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Mr Schmidgall's terms. That opera eats literature would be closer to the truth. The chapter on *Eugene Onegin* is much the best in the book, as Mr Schmidgall shows not just a few interesting semi-academic differences between Pushkin's characters and Tchaikowsky's, but states firmly that there is nothing in common between the two but the characters' names and some of the plot. He also has the courage to assert that for non-Russian speakers, Tchaikowsky's treatment of Tatiana, Onegin, Lensky and Olga is not the sentimental reductionism Nabokov says it is, but a lyrical expansion of some very dry pieces of transmuted Byronism. However, it is not my point to abuse Pushkin: even Charles Johnstone's recent translation of *Eugene Onegin* cannot convince the English-speaking reader that he will ever find greatness in Pushkin. We must bow our heads to the mystery which is Pushkin's poetry. Mr Schmidgall is very fair to Pushkin, taking the Nabokov line (and using the flatly ironic Nabokov translation) that Pushkin is a master of realistic truth, and demonstrating that Tchaikowsky could neither accept this emotionally, nor find any equivalent for it in music. (Incidentally, I cannot agree, on the basis of Nabokov's rendering of *Eugene Onegin*, that Pushkin is Byron's equal as a romantic satirist. *Don Juan* has more life than *Eugene Onegin*, and a much greater sweep of instances and incidents.) So, in the west, we are left with an unintelligible masterpiece in verse, of which one of the world's greatest and most moving operas is alleged to be a travesty. Here is the confrontation of literature and opera at its sharpest. Listening to Tchaikowsky's music in *Eugene Onegin*, I say to myself: long live the temperamental misalliances of men of genius. But the moral is a harsh one—music will never enter into any treaties with the other arts. It is totally imperialistic, and will spoil a masterpiece to make a potentially greater one of its own.

[2] *Romantic Opera and Literary Form.* By PETER CONRAD. University of California Press, $10.00, £5.50.

PETER CONRAD[2] would never give house room to the laboured expoundings of text and music which Mr Schmidgall devotes himself to. Mr Conrad's origins are in the high aphoristic essays of Shaw and Auden. It must be admitted that he does this sparkling forensic stuff very well, and that there are many insights along the way which any lover of Shakespeare, Mozart, Verdi and Wagner will relish. It is not that Mr Conrad takes opera right out of the theatre and plays

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games with it in the Bodleian, but that, time after time, his brilliantly encapsulated paradoxes and confrontations are contradicted by the deeper levels of memory located in the ear. In his writing, all music is born again as literature. Mr Conrad's enthusiasm is for the well-stocked larders of 19th-century art. It was his theory that opera follows the expansive and self-communing processes of the novel rather than the selective highlighting of the drama which prompted me to tell my story of the opera singer at the party. Operatic composers are men of the theatre, however much we opera-lovers feel that most stagings of our favourite works are dreadfully inadequate—at least when put up against the ideal images in our minds.

Peter Conrad frequently overstates his aperçus, as when he describes the Romantics' disembodiment of Shakespeare from dramatist to lyric poet and psychological novelist. Berlioz can do such a thing without destroying the essence of Shakespeare—in his *Roméo et Juliette* symphonic cantata. But when Ted Hughes rearranges speeches from Shakespeare's plays to present their poetry as texts for a pre-Renaissance witch cult, or, worse still, an enlarged casebook of *diablerie à la Beddoes*, then we begin to appreciate that we must leave great poetry where we find it. Something immutable defies our most fierce attempts at metamorphosis. This lies at the heart of my doubts about Mr Conrad's book. He will leave nothing alone and seems unable to value any work of art unless he can incorporate it into his mental world of cross-references and changing definitions. He uses a library-sized Tarnhelm, turning words and music into whatever shapes he pleases. He might argue, very reasonably, that people like me have an over-developed bump of reverence, and simply fail properly to hear and understand the operas we love. Our attitude gets no books written. But his brilliance does not cohere, and the reader is left at the end with a handful of disparate notions.

At almost any point, whether he is discussing Wagner's *Ring*, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* or Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Mr Conrad categorises the essentially musical reality of the works he has to hand by reference to literary forms. There is no real language for music (other than itself, which is then not commentary but extension), and when the text of an opera is magical, symbolic or contradictory, it will respond well to literary expounding. So Mr Conrad on Verdi and *Falstaff*, on Goethe and *Die Zauberflöte* and Hofmannsthal and *Elektra*, is entertaining, startling and unconvincing by turns—but he is seldom true to the nature of the operas as we experience them when we see or hear them. Instead, they have been taken into the giant museum of 19th-century art and we are invited to see how the new curator has put them on display in complex and revealing arrangements. When W. H. Auden was curator, he showed them dashingly enough: this book is Peter Conrad's more thoroughly erudite presentation of an entire cultural heritage. For all its brilliance, his is a collector's enthusiasm. This is the more surprising as he castigates several of his predecessors for doing exactly that.

ONE CONSEQUENCE of Mr Conrad's ability to see literature wherever he looks is his healthy scepticism of previous littérateurs who have given their services to opera. His assessment of Hofmannsthal's weakness as a mythmaker is soundly debunking, and I can only wish that he had applied the same rigour to Goethe. It is curious that he can imagine, though in no readily expoundable way, that words are as powerful as music. Where he has located this power in Shakespeare, he wishes to excavate it from its context. The extreme cleverness of his book is a disguise for an underlying uneasiness. If Mr Conrad's own words were greater he would not need to turn masterpieces of music into totems of his own intelligence. He makes a good case against Shaw's exegetical pronouncements on *Die Zauberflöte* and *Der Ring*. Shaw, the music lover, basically distrusted music. Though this is exaggerated, there is some truth in it. But the reflection does not flatter Mr Conrad's own performance. He trusts neither literature nor music, but only the critic's modern ability to grade and arrange the masterpieces of both arts.

Criticism, as he writes it, is indeed a form of creative literature, but it is heavily over-insured. He risks nothing by his audacities. This is made clear when he describes the parodistic transformations of Hofmannsthal's and Strauss's *Ariadne*:

> Myth is abraded by the idea of performance, its impostures and its interruptions, and the sheer shame of the theatre . . . . All that is left of the gods is their costumes, which vain opera-singers try on for effect. These are the latter-day metamorphoses of the gods: Ariadne is no longer herself but a Marschallin between lovers; Bacchus is no longer the son of Venus but a self-possessed Hanswurst indulging in a tantrum.

But this is to deliberately read things backwards. Hofmannsthal, for once, can plead that he is not being devious or over-ingenious. The seedy reality of the Prologue (which nevertheless contains the high claims of the Composer) is followed by the opera's affirmation of godhead, when Ariadne is carried off by Bacchus. Cynicism

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and worldliness continue into the opera proper in the form of the characters from the *commedia dell'arte*, but the last word is with the gods. Doubts about the value of the score's last pages don't alter the case. Hofmannsthal has kept the gods high by recognising that their presence in the modern world will be manifested only in shoddy parodies. But they remain the gods, and there is nothing cynical in his view of them. Also, Mr Conrad misreads Strauss's literalness. In *Salome*, he asserts, Strauss's orchestra seeks to translate each linguistic event into an impression. But then so does Bach's. The waves of the River Jordan, the cooing of turtle doves, the raging of the dragon of sin, the battle between the angel host and their infernal opponents, are all interpreted literally by Bach. His cantatas present the most wide-ranging catalogue of effects in the history of music. He is as happy illustrating a small down-to-earth piece of imagery as he is in finding notes for the highest forms of symbolism. But musical works suggest literary parallels to Mr Conrad, not other compositions. Composers belong with each other more than they do with novelists, poets and philosophers, and keeping them apart with words is Mr Conrad's worst sin.

HAMISH SWANSTON in *In Defence of Opera*[3] flies much lower than Peter Conrad, but his is a sensible and readable account of opera in the modern world. It is much more valuable than Mr Schmidgall's more expensive enterprise. There is nothing very new in Mr Swanston's survey, but there is nothing strained or silly either. One special insight is very welcome—he points to Verdi's strong vein of melancholy and near-misanthropy. There is no hope for mankind in Verdi's music, except that galvanism and power will help us live life through to the end. The heart of Verdi is not in his love music, not even in those duets between fathers and daughters, and fathers and daughters-in-law. Verdi stays the hawk-faced condottiere—a veritable Sforza of music.

[3] *In Defence of Opera*. By HAMISH F. G. SWANSTON. Penguin, £1.25.

Actonians & Africa

On the Moral Judgments of Historians—By JOHN HARGREAVES

WRITING HISTORY involves repeated acts of judgment, whether explicit or implicit. Those for which historians are best equipped by training are small-scale *operational* judgments—whether or not to accredit particular pieces of evidence; how far to accept their relevance to the main thrust of the enquiry; which problems demand or deserve further study. But the final design of the argument or narrative will depend not only on the technical achievements of the research, but on *substantive* judgments concerning the teleological significance of the events under study. Even those who cannot accept E. H. Carr's famous paradox that "only the future can provide the key to the interpretation of the past"[1] and think the "losers" still worth studying must work with their own perceptions of things to come. Those who now despise Whig constitutional history would never have devoted so much scholarly energy to the gyrations of 18th-century MPs had Namier not identified the origins of party as a question crucial to the understanding of modern parliamentary government. Some historians make these judgments more explicitly and confidently than others; but none can avoid them completely.

Moral judgments—evaluations by historians of the behaviour of persons of whom they are writing—are more controversial. When authoritatively pronounced on the basis of *a priori* values they can be intolerably smug; few historians would now echo Acton's famous advice:

> . . . to try others by the final maxim that governs your own lives, and to suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong.[2]

Censoriousness can be tiresome to the reader and corrupting to the writer. Yet until historians devise a vocabulary drained of the moral implications of ordinary language, *some* moral judgments will be implicit in almost everything they write. (Fritz Fischer's sober assessment of Germany's aims in the First World War was instantly and widely perceived to carry far-reaching moral implications.) Indeed it seems almost impossible to divorce moral from sub-

[1] E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (1961) p. 117.
[2] Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (1906) [1895], p. 24.

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stantive historical judgments on subjects of contemporary concern or controversy.

MODERN AFRICAN HISTORY has long been such a subject. In the days of confident colonialism few European writers doubted that the conquest of the continent represented historical progress, or hesitated to make moral evaluations. The first historian of the partition saw himself describing "the one barbarous continent parcelled out among the most civilised powers of Europe",[3] and similar perspectives were shared by most European writers until the Second World War. Since then extensive researches, carried out in rapidly changing historical environments, have not only produced radical revisions of received knowledge and assumptions, but have led to very different moral judgments about Afro-European relations —so different that some critics discern a general tendency towards "positive discrimination" in favour of the moral virtues of Africans.

Lord Blake, turning from his distinguished studies of modern British politics to Rhodesian history,[4] recognises that pre-colonial African societies, though technically primitive, were "subtle and highly complicated", and that their political systems merit respectful study. Though revolted by accounts of Ndebele raids on their neighbours, Blake sees that they were not "totally arbitrary slaughter for the sake of slaughter", but "a tributary system ... not unlike a mafia 'protection' racket." But as he moves on to his major theme, the evolution of racial oligarchy, one senses his relief at reaching familiar ground, however unattractive, where moral implications are more easily discerned within the numerous "turning points" of Rhodesian history. Although Blake avoids the more facile type of external criticism, in settler Salisbury his book will be acclaimed only by that shrinking "liberal establishment" whose failure he laments but does much to explain. The early settlers "behaved oppressively, tyrannically and lawlessly"; their successors grew complacent and short-sighted in the prosperity which conquest made possible; the folly of UDI, Blake concludes after examining important new evidence, can be rationalised only on the assumption of an intention to move towards *apartheid*. Yet despite all this "violence, myopia and folly", he clearly assumes that the settlers represented forces of progress against which the Mwari cults and the spirit mediums of 1896–7 were struggling vainly.

> Whatever happened, an Iron Age monarchy would not for long have co-existed with the Chartered Company.... The Ndebele state was cruel and barbarous. Its passing need cause no regret.

IT IS THUS PERHAPS in his moral landscape, rather than in his substantive assessment of the course of African history, that Lord Blake differs most sharply from Keltie's generation. Other historians, whose research has been focused on African rather than European behaviour, sometimes form substantive judgments of a very different tendency. As studies of pre-colonial African societies have revealed the range of their achievements, the coherence and rationality of institutions formerly dismissed as "barbarous", it has become plausible to believe that, but for the sudden incursion of European power, many independent African states could have proved capable of surviving into the modern world. There is some uncertainty as to what form this survival might have taken—some writers seem to postulate processes of "self-modernisation" somewhat after the Japanese model, others more distinctively African developments according to the mystical traditional values of *négritude*. Various intermediate positions are possible, but whatever the teleological assumption European intervention appears a tragic and immoral interference with the course of African history.

Some such substantive judgment clearly underlies a vigorous new work of *haute vulgarisation* by Obaro Ikime, head of the pioneer History department of Ibadan University.[5] Though it is addressed primarily to Nigerians, British readers too need to appreciate how the 19th-century can appear as a period when the activities of missionaries, traders and consuls were preparing, consciously or not, for the eventual conquest of thriving polities. The solid and perceptive scholarship which Ikime has displayed in earlier books here leads him to forthright conclusions. Sir Harry Johnston was as "ignoble" as his opponent King Jaja was "noble"; Lugard was not only hypocritical but probably sadistic. The British refused to recognise the validity of Yoruba law when it prescribed castration or death as penalties for adultery, but they bent their own concepts of justice to legitimise aggression. By recounting an episode relating to each of the twelve states into which Nigeria was divided between 1967 and 1976, Ikime emphasises that modern Nigeria was formed by the shared experience of British

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[3] J. S. Keltie, *The Partition of Africa* (1895), p. 1.

[4] *A History of Rhodesia*. By ROBERT BLAKE. Eyre Methuen, £12.50.

[5] *The Fall of Nigeria*. By OBARO IKIME. Heinemann, £5.50, paper £2.20.

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imperialism; but Nigerian patriots owe no gratitude for that, since it is assumed that these diverse peoples were in process of developing superior alternatives of their own.

For Northern Nigerians, as for others, these would certainly have been based upon Islam; but it is not easy for *non-arabisants* to judge what this might have meant. During the 1960s several western-trained historians equipped themselves to study the substantial body of doctrinal and mystical writing by African Muslims, and to evaluate their influence upon surrounding states and societies; the Afro-American scholar J. R. Willis has now assembled a useful volume of essays which are largely by-products of such research.[6] His valuable synoptic introduction distinguishes three major "traditions of Islamic diffusion" which have profoundly influenced West African history, and have provided many peoples with continuity of experience through recent periods of drastic change. Willis himself emphasises how, within the great *jihad* of al-Hajj Umar al-Futi (c. 1794–1864), "rootless individuals of all ethnic backgrounds once again could look to Islam as a source of cultural identity"; and Lucy Behrman suggests that the Mouride brotherhood founded by Ahmad Bamba (1850–1927), a pious *marabout* who long attracted French suspicion and hostility, "offered a kind of security to his fellow Wolof whose social and political system was disintegrating." Certainly the religious authority, political influence and wealth of the Mourides remain conspicuous sources of stability in President Senghor's Senegal; and when colonial rule can be seen in longer historical perspective, it may seem actually to have hastened the fulfilment of prophecies by eminent Victorians like Richard Burton and E. W. Blyden, who saw Africa's historical destiny as a distinct new province within the Muslim world.

HENRY WILSON, OUTLINING *The Imperial Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1870* in a series directed towards American students of European expansion,[7] agrees that important things were happening on the eve of his period; he endorses the view that the West African *jihads*, the expansion of East African kingdoms like Buganda, the resurgence of the Ethiopian

[6] *Studies in West African Islamic History: I, The Cultivators of Islam.* Edited by JOHN RALPH WILLIS. Frank Cass, approx. price £15 (autumn publication).

[7] *The Imperial Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1870.* By HENRY S. WILSON. (Europe and the World in the Age of Expansion, ed. Boyd C. Shafer, Vol. VIII.) University of Minnesota Press, $18.50; Oxford University Press, £14.

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monarchy, the wave of conquests called the *mfecane* which were prompted by the rise of the Zulu state, formed parts of an incipient "African partition of Africa." But he also emphasises the great diversity of African experience, even within the broad "culture areas" which scholars have variously defined, and the durability of "the basic local institutions of the village and chiefdom" during the rise and fall of successive hegemonies. Because of this wise caution Wilson's book is more successful in synthesising and evaluating specific episodes and aspects of the "imperial experience" than in conveying any comprehensive judgment of its historical significance. Unlike older Imperial historians Wilson sees that the period can only be understood as one of complex interactions between European and African societies, but he does not suggest whether the proto-nationalisms of the latter were moving towards the "self-modernisation" of the continent or to the renewal of traditional cultures. There are however indications that he has been strongly impressed by another "lively school of historiography" which has come to see African history since the 17th century as a record of increasing dependency rather than of interrupted growth.

IN MANY WAYS, THIS SCHOOL represents a reaction towards Imperial history of a more critical type. During the 1960s the exciting results of new African historiography (based on oral traditions, archaeology, or the closer scrutiny of European or Islamic documents) often led patriotic Africans and their sympathisers to create nostalgic images of the world they had lost—and which, now the colonisers had gone, they might aspire to revive. Many recent writers, increasingly conscious that the world's inequalities will not easily yield to the formulae of liberal development theory, have been more inclined to see European intrusion as a long-term reality than as a regrettable aberration happily terminated by the end of colonial rule. Research on particular episodes in Afro-European relationships has led many scholars to conclude that the history of the whole "Third World" has been a record of the progressive "development of under-development"—a position from which it is difficult to avoid proceeding to moral judgments on European behaviour.

Ambitious attempts at a comprehensive application of dependency theory to African history have been made by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch.[8] Though anxious to recognise the identity of pre-colonial societies, Islamic or otherwise, she sees that what passes as "African tradition" is often "a hold-all of telescoped particulars, a flattened resumé of the past." If some of the "peasant societies" of pre-colonial Africa were indeed stabler and happier than those of the 20th century (and this must remain uncertain, given the lack of evidence, and of any usable measure for the quantum of happiness) this was less because of their specific cultural virtues than because they remained longer outside the network of commercial relationships into which groups of their countrymen were being successively, and more or less willingly, drawn. Colonial rule, according to Coquery, was essentially a catalyst to ensure "the insertion of the Black world into the world-wide capitalist system", and political independence merely marked the completion of this process. On this view, the prime responsibility of the historian of Africa is to illuminate the growth of this dependence, so that African leaders may discover a new historical identity appropriate to the 20th century. It is a powerful theory, of which more will be heard; but as Coquery's critics have pointed out much work needs to be done before it can be closely applied to the complex diversity of African historical experience, and Wilson was probably prudent to attempt no such grand continental syntheses.

THESE WORKS DEMONSTRATE not only the continuing vigour of African historical studies but some of the problems of their maturity. During the early 1960s, the confident morning of African independence, historians had an exhilarating sense of advancing intellectual frontiers into rich virgin territories. Now we face problems of more intensive cultivation, and most of us would qualify our early judgments on broad themes like the goals of African resistance, or the differences between French and British colonial administration. Vigorous pioneering treatments of such themes by Michael Crowder, when reprinted unchanged among his collected essays, have a slightly dated air;[9] these subjects seem to demand not only concentrated researches of some technical difficulty (such as are exemplified by Crowder's own valuable studies of Borgu), but further readjustments of perspective. Logically, no doubt, both substantive and moral judgments should grow out of the technical operations of historical research; in practice historical study cannot follow such a logical sequence. The sample

[8] Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "La mise en dépendance de l'afrique noire: essai de periodisation, 1800–1970", *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines*, XVI (Paris 1976). See also C. Coquery-Vidrovitch and H. Moniot, *L'Afrique Noire de 1800 à nos jours* (P.U.F., Série *Nouvelle Clio* 46, 1974).

[9] *Colonial West Africa: Collected Essays*. By MICHAEL CROWDER. Frank Cass, £11.50.

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of works noted above illustrates the difficulty of expecting dispassionate neutrality from historians who care about contemporary conflicts concerning world poverty or race.

Actonian notes sounded by some of these writers have been quoted already, and others could be added. Their general tendency is to condemn some at least of the actions and the agents of European imperialism. Henry Wilson in particular seems anxious to avoid extending substantive into moral judgments, but even he cannot avoid pronouncing a form of "undying penalty" on Leopold II and his collaborators. And here I must reveal an interest, for I was myself recently rebuked by Dr Paul Hair for practising "positive discrimination", and used to exemplify a general tendency toward "special pleading on behalf of Africans" which, combined with Actonian strictures on certain European actions, was said to amount to patronising "head-patting."[10] White historians of Africa, Hair implies, are still prone to the perversities of radical chic; perhaps an unlikely charge to bring against Lord Blake, who certainly makes more forthright judgments on white than on black Rhodesians, but one which merits serious attention.

Let it be accepted for the purpose of discussion that many who write about past relationships between Africans and Europeans do tend to dispense moral censure upon the latter more readily than upon the former. Certain reasons for this seem inherent in the enterprise. There is extensive documentary evidence available from which to judge the intentions and motives of literate Europeans, as well as the substantive significance of what they were doing; sometimes moral implications emerge from these texts too strongly for historians to avoid, even if they suppress them. This effect may be strongest upon historians who share some of the cultural and moral values of the actors concerned; such common assumptions greatly facilitate that process of "re-enactment" which Collingwood regarded as the essence of historical understanding. (It is precisely Lord Blake's sympathetic understanding of the political dilemmas of White Rhodesians which leads him to so severe a judgment upon UDI.) But documentary evidence of African thinking is much less abundant, and it is formidably difficult for Europeans to re-enact their moral universe from the record of their behaviour; the basis for informed moral judgments is largely absent.

[10] In his review of *West Africa Partitioned,* Vol. 1, in *English Historical Review* XCII (No. 365, October 1977), pp. 868–9.

THE PURSUIT OF EQUALITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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It may be that a reprehensible sympathy for technological under-dogs, tinged no doubt with subliminal guilt, does occasionally lead historians to pat an uncomprehending head. But Dr Hair seems to complain of something more: he cites judgments on the borderline between the substantive and the moral which were intended to emphasise the rationality, rather than the virtue, of certain African political behaviour. This is surprising, for Hair has himself been at pains to emphasise precisely such elements of rationality when discussing the morally ambiguous topic of African involvement in the slave trade. This, like the European partition of Africa, may not be a subject for undying penalties or rewards; but in both cases it seems important to use language which will emphasise the radical nature of new judgments which emerge from historical research. Historians writing for European publishers must still expect to find readers so unfamiliar with the cultural assumptions of pre-colonial Africans, so strongly influenced by the racial mythology of earlier generations, that internal consistencies of African behaviour require a degree of emphasis which would be tiresome if applied to Europeans. Despite the dangers of condescension some degree of "positive discrimination" may be a necessary stage in ensuring that the continuing harvests of African historical research are widely accepted and absorbed into Western man's understanding of world history.

Versions of Death

Recent Poetry—By FLEUR ADCOCK

JOHN BERRYMAN DIED in 1972 and Robert Lowell last year; their two posthumous collections have appeared together. But even without this contrived coincidence they had so much in common that it would be difficult to say much about one and not mention the other: both fought against similar demons, and both converted these struggles into verse autobiographies, utterly distinctive and distinct from one another but fed by the same compulsions. "We asked to be obsessed with writing,/and we were", Lowell wrote in his poem "For John Berryman"; and a few lines earlier:

> *I used to want to live*
> *to avoid your elegy.*
> *Yet really we had the same life,*
> *the generic one*
> *our generation offered*
> (Les Maudits—*the compliment*
> *each American generation*
> *pays itself in passing*)....

The Berryman volume was put together by an editor, John Haffenden;[1] much of it is unpublished work, a small selection from the vast amount found in manuscript after the poet's death (he was very prolific.) It begins with 45 Dream Songs, not necessarily rejected by Berryman but uncollected; they followed on from *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest* in 1968 and were written "just out of habit", as he admitted. But a habit is not always a mere tic, a mannerism, and many of these are well worth having. They seem in fact to suffer less from mannerism (using the word now of style) than some of the earlier Songs; even allowing for the fact that familiarity has reduced the impression of obscurity in Berryman's work, his crabbed, knotted language and dislocated syntax are here less evident as a barrier to understanding. On this and on his habit of writing it is useful to quote him:

> *The song was made in darkness, to be set alit*
> *(obstacles placed by the singer in the way of it)*
> *by a hearer like a new friend.*
>
> *Gravid Henry groaning, tousled like a mop—*
> *these labour-pains, how can he keep it up?*
> *Is it our need he feels,*
> *or something just between the two of them,*
> *Henry & the English language, his stratagem*
> *besides the banana peels.*

Not all of these work; some are merely silly or self-obsessed. But there are some good pieces, including several on his tour of European cities ("my God what visible places".) Assuming that one can take the Dream Songs at all, with their first-person/third-person Henry and their relentless tricksiness, one can well take these.

The remainder of the book is in three sections: finished poems in forms other than that of the 18-line Dream Songs; a few fragments and unfinished poems (interesting to scholars and aficionados but not in themselves very satisfying); and finally a group of poems written at the end of

[1] *Henry's Fate.* By JOHN BERRYMAN. Edited by JOHN HAFFENDEN. Faber, £2.75.

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the poet's life when he was once again receiving treatment for his alcoholism. These are agonised and agonising, full of pain; full also, inevitably, of self-pity. But why not? It was natural in the circumstances, and as it is an emotion to which so many of us are subject we may as well have it expressed for us in literature. And Berryman's sympathies were for others in his predicament as well as for himself: here is the end of "Group", a poem written in hospital:

> *Each hopeless fear slowly around the circle*
> *gnaws into view, or blurts. Each long-dry throat*
> *still, still with horror & passion runs*
> *immortal alcohols.*

This is not the collection to recommend as an introduction to Berryman's work; but for those who are already addicted to him it fulfils a need.

LOWELL'S WORK appears, by comparison, fluent and effortless. *Day by Day*[2] was published in the US shortly before his death and is thus the product of his own intentions, not those of an editor. Much of it is occupied by the title sequence, dedicated to his wife and tracing a period of their lives in separate but interrelated lyrics; but most of the other poems in the volume are also personal in that they dwell on the poet's past, his friends, and his regular preoccupations (marriage, family history, and, of course, death). However, they do not have the smothering effect of naked autobiography. True, there is some discreet gossip-fodder, and some stimulation of our curiosity. (Which critic is he describing? Whose name is concealed by a dash?) But he looks in many directions—outward, forward, over his shoulder, as well as into his own psyche and surroundings—with generosity, gentleness and wit. "Domesday Book" is about all country houses, not just the one in which he lives; "Marriage" is about the couple in the Arnolfini painting as well as about the poet and his family. He is in fact so universal in places that there is a distracting temptation to quote his aphorisms: "Age is the bilge/we cannot shake from the mop." "Being old in good times is worse/than being young in bad."

Above all, he wrote so well. Released from the fourteen-line stanza of *Notebook* and its successors (which could be monotonous in bulk), he continued his movement away from strict forms and used for the most part a relaxed, supple, free verse which can take in almost anything without pretentiousness and without grating of gears—dinner-parties; tormented nights alone; a forced

[2] *Day by Day*. By ROBERT LOWELL. Faber, £3.95.

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removal to a psychiatric hospital; days in the garden with children. Over and over again he chooses exactly the right telling detail to include, as when describing an ageing poet:

> *. . . when he cut short the cocktail hour,*
> *expelled his guests,*
> *and sat down in the ebbing twilight*
> *to the early supper of a child . . .*
> *an old choirboy chirping in his stall,*
> *too tipsy to manage his knife. . . .*

There are sagging lines and prosy rhythms here and there; and the collection could have been shorter. But there is so much in it to admire (including the often underestimated virtue of readability) that I find my criticisms giving way to simple relief that we have these poems at all. A precariousness hangs over many of them. Lowell knew what to expect (or knew, at any rate, enough to expect something soon) but didn't make a fuss about it: "A false calm is the best calm." The prophetically-titled "This Golden Summer" ends:

> *I will leave earth*
> *with my shoes tied*
> *as if the walk*
> *could cut bare feet.*

KEITH DOUGLAS, born after both Lowell and Berryman, was killed in action in 1944 at the age of 24, leaving a number of accomplished poems and a few which are unforgettable. This new edition by Desmond Graham,[3] whose extremely detailed biography of Douglas appeared in 1974, is not in fact the "Complete Poems" of the title—it does not include all the juvenilia; but it is a work of loving scholarship based on careful examination of all the surviving manuscripts and published sources. It amends the previously accepted order of the poems and offers a number of variants on their texts, including several preferred versions which will shock devotees (one or two are likely to upset almost anyone.) There is an appendix of notes on sources, and in cases where the editor has chosen an unfamiliar version of an important poem he prints the better-known version in the notes.

Douglas was alarmingly precocious in more ways than one: his schoolboy drawings were admired (there is a strong visual element in his poems) and his early writings showed a similar confidence and technical flair. He was fond of ritual, from military drill to the theatrical rituals

[3] *Complete Poems of Keith Douglas.* Edited by DESMOND GRAHAM. Oxford University Press, £3.95.

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of ballet and mime, and this trait combined with certain literary influences gave a decorative remoteness to much of what he wrote before his army service. The trappings of his undergraduate verse—gods and princesses and painted actors, towers and gardens and the stagy background of Oxford—work to obscure the fact that he had even then an individual and indeed very odd literary personality. He was romantic, certainly, and the tough postures which he sometimes adopted did not conceal a lingering sentimentality. He was fascinated by military activities but ambiguous in his feelings about war. He rebelled against authority when it suited him. He enjoyed decay and a touch of necrophilia: the dead Leukothea stored underground in the poem now re-titled "Speech for an Actor" (and sadly revised) is not exceptional; elsewhere he keeps the young lady in an attic, and related images recur. But the element of adolescent sensation-seeking in his character which at times makes him less than appealing as a person did not affect the patient dedicated craftsmanship of his poems, nor his search for precision of language.

It was of course the war which taught him so rapidly to extend his powers. Even before 1941, when he wrote "Simplify me when I'm dead", he had begun to simplify his verse; and in 1943 he wrote in a letter from Palestine: "My rhythms, which you find enervated, are carefully chosen to enable the poems to be *read* as significant speech." To his great credit, his rhythms had always had something of this quality: even in his early verse there was often an honourably tentative, flexible and natural voice speaking through the literary verse-patterns. With the war he learnt also to eliminate what was not natural from his subject-matter. This is not to say that his poems became casual or crude. They continued to be carefully worked, going through many drafts, and contained complex enough networks of images and references. But they were drier, harder, more of the desert. Under this discipline the lyrical phrase ceased to be a habit and was reserved for positions where it would tell, as at the end of "Vergissmeinnicht", where "And death who had the soldier singled/has done the lover mortal hurt" comes after an almost neutral description of the dead German gunner.

There is an injustice, but one which can hardly be avoided, in classifying as a war-poet a man who did not live to develop into anything else. Douglas himself, writing about what the poets of the First World War had achieved, said: "Hell cannot be let loose twice: it was let loose in the Great War and it is the same old hell now.... Almost all that a modern poet on active service is inspired to write, would be tautological." What he achieved was what all poets aim at achieving:

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The Cliché Cocktail

Since it is now teetering on the fringe of a vicious circle where poor money supply figures lead to lack of gilt sales which in turn lead to worse money supply figures it is worth asking just how gloomy the market should be. **Hamish Macrae,** *Guardian*

The Nob's Pronoun

Have I not read somewhere that 'God helps he who helps himself'? **C. I. Rycroft,** *The Times*

The Caveman Pot Pourri

Made one year previous, the audience still hadn't heard no dialogue yet, just orchestral backing and sound effects. – *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*

The Dangler

'Oh, never mind that, girl', the teacher said. 'You're not going to get a question about that in the exam.' And that was that. As an example of teaching literature, I would rather trust my kid to almost any comprehensive school I can think of. **Alan Forrest,** *Books & Bookmen*

The Elegant Double Negative

Though not unaverse to men – 'I like them very much' – she would have told her constituency party to 'go jump in the Nene' if they had asked her to be photographed with one. **Alec Hartley,** *Guardian*

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a style. I do not share the fashionable view that he had perfected it by the time he died; but it was already a powerful instrument, capable of amazingly subtle rhythmical and verbal effects, and he used it to produce some poems which no one could call tautological.

PETER PORTER HAS always been, to put it mildly, interested in death: in his earlier collections he frequently reflected upon the deaths of others or contemplated his own, and even in his lighter poems death was always ready to sidle in among the lines of pointed social commentary and the mosaics of multi-cultural allusion. Now in this fine new collection[4] death is at the centre. It is difficult to say it without sounding callous, but it needs somehow to be said: the death of his wife at the end of 1974 presented Mr Porter with a subject ideally suited to his gifts and temperament. The best of the poems about his loss have a poignant bleak simplicity, a sober concentration; without abandoning all his tricks of style he has refined out the baroque curlicues of his more playful works and achieved a flexible but direct eloquence: see "The Delegate", "The Easiest Room in Hell", and "An Exequy", which is modelled upon Bishop King's poem of that title and contains the moving lines:

> *I owe a death to you—one day*
> *The time will come for me to pay*
> *When your slim shape from photographs*
> *Stands at my door and gently asks*
> *If I have any work to do*
> *Or will I come to bed with you.*

"An Angel in Blythburgh Church" is another success, beginning effectively enough as a piece of description but homing in on the inevitable vision at the end:

> *. . . Rather I think of a woman lying on her bed*
> *Staring for hours up to the ceiling where*
> *Nothing is projected—death the only angel*
> *To shield her from despair.*

Not all of this collection broods upon death: there is a range of mood and of topic. Mr Porter's other chief subject has always been art (a word which crops up in these pages nearly as often as the word "hell"). Making one of several ventures to analyse the deficiencies of poetry as a medium, he writes in "The Lying Art":

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[4] *The Cost of Seriousness.* By PETER PORTER. Oxford University Press, £2.50.

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It is all rhetoric rich as wedding cake
and promising the same bleak tears
when what was asked for but not recognized
shows its true face after a thousand breakfasts.

The other arts do not escape his attention; in "Three Transportations" he wittily imagines how Gertrude Stein, Piero di Cosimo and Boccherini would have reacted to Australia if they had ever been there; and from here to the end of the volume we seem for the most part to have the old Porter back again: poems about Italian cities, musical works and paintings offer the familiar collage of vivid, often unexpected or even ludicrous images with aphorisms, insights, quotations, an occasional grandiose abstract phrase: cleverly done (he is notably clever) and not impersonal, not without resonances. But suddenly among these we find "Non Piangere, Liù", one of the plainest and most piercingly immediate poems in the book. It begins:

A card comes to tell you
you should report
to have your eyes tested.

But your eyes melted in the fire.
and the only tears, which soon dried,
fell in the chapel.

and ends:

The fire will come out of the sun
and I shall look in the heart of it.

Writing like this he is totally convincing.

JEFFREY WAINWRIGHT'S FIRST collection[5] shows the influence of Geoffrey Hill, in its spare, precise language and subdued intensities; but is none the worse for that. Historical events and characters provide most of the themes. The central sequence, "Thomas Muntzer", is a vividly imaginative presentation of the inner life of a Protestant radical visionary martyred in 1525. His social concern, and the poet's, shine through the limpidly-written three-line stanzas:

I see my brother crawling in the woods
To gather snails' shells. This is not
A vision. *Look carefully and you can tell*

How he is caught in the roots of a tree
Whose long branches spread upwards bearing as
Fruit gardeners and journeymen, merchants

And lawyers, jewellers and bishops. . . .

"1815", which opens with the image of a mill-girl drowned in a canal, also has this quality:

The graves have not
A foot's width between them.
Apprentices, jiggers, spinners
Fill them straight from work,
Common as smoke.

Waterloo is all the rage;
Coal and iron and wool
Have supplied the English miracle.

Elsewhere the tone is ironic, as in "Sentimental Education", a group of three poems which do not pretend to be personal; "Delicatesse" speaks of a "revolution":

. . . One can conjure whole suburbs, postmen,
Plumbers, flushed inelegant shopgirls
Ardent to be tearing up cobble stones.

What is all that compared with an eel stew,
Chicken, hard bread, and wine sharp on the tongue?
We eat ravenously, honest jagged knives
In our hands, the light of candles
Surrendering to your eyes. Ah my sweet,
To lose you will be such delicious sorrow!

[5] *Heart's Desire.* By JEFFREY WAINWRIGHT. Carcanet Press, £2.50.

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The emotions in these poems are nearly always presented as someone else's. One device used for this distancing effect is to offer what appear to be translations even though the poet specifically denies that they are, admitting in his notes only that lines from earlier literature provided the "kindling" for them. Thus in the lyrics which close the volume there are echoes from Spanish poetry and from medieval French and English songs. Occasionally the results tilt over into preciousness, but more often these scrupulously chiselled constructions have the timeless quality of folk art. It is not easy to be sure how much this derives from the poet's exploitation of existing phrases; and how much this matters is too old and too large a question to open here. Whatever the case, this is an attractive as well as a serious first collection.

THE LATEST BATCH of Harry Chambers' Peterloo Poets is published from his new address in Cornwall, but the poets themselves are northern. The most original is Keith Howden,[6] whose entire collection consists of five related sequences set in a town at the edge of a moor, in which the same characters and events revolve and recur: Joe Anderson who caught bluebottles and tied miniature advertising banners to them with threads of hair; the randy landlord of the World's End pub and his legless wife; the boy who blew his hands off with a grenade; Rufus the monkey. The technique is not so much narrative as kaleidoscopic, with a ritual use of repetition—incidents are rehearsed from different angles, phrases rearrange themselves, Homeric epithets ("the ballock sun"; "banal drogues") are echoed. All this happens in rhymed or semi-rhymed quatrains and in language which is densely slow-moving, crammed with verbs and adjectives. Somehow this mad, macabre stuff, part black-comic fantasy and part grim documentary, comes off. I'm not sure whether this book is a work of literature or merely a curiosity; but at £1.50 for a good-looking 64-page volume, readers can cheaply decide for themselves.

[6] *Marches of Familiar Landscape*. By KEITH HOWDEN. Peterloo Poets (Harry Chambers, Treovis Farm Cottage, Upton Cross, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 5BQ), £1.50.

The Zoological Museum Revisited

(*for the class of '78*)

We look at two species of lungfish,
their skin, like a fat woman's leg, not quite smooth,
their aimless sinusoids distorted out of depth
by the glass's strict security.

As we watch their fins, like tentacles on one,
thin humanoid stumps on the other,
I tell you that the fish are primitive
but not ancestral. In the cases, skeletons confirm.

It's what they told me to say. Now, after the dodo
and the dugong, the sail-backed reptile
and the golden mole, they have wired into articulation
the bones of a man. After the rabbit and the rat

we come to this case last. Did I make my lesson clear?
We are not heroes but survivors.
After the primates we find no easy exit—
by the door the lungfish wallow still.

William Peskett

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LETTERS

Urban & Alienation

I WAS MOST interested in the lengthy interview with Luigi Barzini in the May issue of ENCOUNTER. Nevertheless, the opening comments by George Urban seemed to me to have set the discussion off on the wrong foot, with dire consequences for the notion of freedom, which was what the discussion was about.

Mr Urban began by describing a studio manager working at Bush House in the BBC, who left her basement flat, took a tube, worked in the basement of the BBC, returned home by tube and gave her husband frozen food. This was supposed to be a condemnation of a whole way of life brought about by capitalism and industrialism.

As a description of the life of a studio manager it is of course preposterous. In the first place, the number of English people living in basement flats is minimal. We have the highest proportion of people in Western Europe living in their own houses, almost all of which are above ground. Next, no BBC studio manager works for 40 hours a week entirely under ground, and to describe a studio manager's job in terms of pulling a few knobs is a travesty. I have broadcast for many years, and while it is true that the jobs of presenters and producers are more interesting, the studio manager has always played a most important part in the production of programmes, and the opportunity of meeting people and of helping in the formulation of a programme is extremely common. Thirdly, even if the work were as dreary as is suggested by Mr Urban—which I do not for one moment concede—there are substantial numbers of public holidays, and freedom from work in the form of annual leave, to which must be added the fact that, even assuming that the studio manager sleeps for eight hours a night regularly, only one third of her waking hours during the weeks that she works a full week are taken up with her work. Thus, the opportunities for activity outside work are certainly very high, and if her husband works as well —there is no mention of children—their income must also be adequate for a considerable amount of fairly expensive relaxation.

The reason why I raise these somewhat pedestrian points is that the people who actually do jobs which are regarded by Mr Urban as dreary beyond belief seem to me first of all usually to enjoy their jobs, and secondly to lead vigorous lives outside work in sport, entertainment and so on, which belie the assumption which he makes that their life is totally robot-like.

Finally, on the question of frozen food, there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that most frozen raw materials are less attractive or in some ways more synthetic than other food, and further, the evidence of food consumption patterns over the past 25 years suggests that cooking is becoming much more elaborate and creative, if that is the right word, than ever before.

Is it not the case, therefore, that modern technological development has in fact very considerably enriched the life of most of those whom Mr Urban appears to regard as something like rats caught up in a maze rather than the contrary?

JOHN VAIZEY

House of Lords
Westminster

I MUST HAVE expressed myself very badly if John Vaizey really thinks that my introductory remarks were about the incidence of basement living in the UK, frozen food, cooking, and the like. What I did attempt to do was to depict, through the example of a BBC studio manager, the state of individual liberty and job satisfaction in modern society—capitalist, socialist, and (*a fortiori*) Soviet.

My observations were meant to be (need I say it?) a moot and a challenge to get the discussion going—not a disquisition on the merits and demerits of BBC employment. I could have chosen book-binders, post office sorters or car assembly-line men to make my point, and put them in tower blocks in Paris rather than basement flats in London.

I chose the life of a BBC studio manager for my metaphor because I have myself watched BBC studio managers in action for a period of twelve years, five days a week, in the European Services of the BBC; and I can assure Lord Vaizey that on no occasions did I see them engaged "in the formulation of the programme." Rather did I see them perform tasks which Lord Vaizey rightly thinks I regard as "dreary beyond belief"—turning knobs in underground studios and making ten-second station identification announcements between language broadcasts they did not understand.

Do I regard people engaged in such work as "rats caught up in a maze"? I do—but, as Luigi Barzini explained, many people don't. They find security within the maze a more acceptable condition than insecurity outside it. Whether this answers my question or is itself part of the problem would take us into another discussion.

GEORGE URBAN

Hove, Sussex

"Legends Spies Tell"

IN HIS ARTICLE in your April issue, "Legends Spies Tell", Robert Cecil says that "within a few days of Burgess's disappearance" Guy Liddell "the respected Deputy Director of MI5" was demoted to Chief Security Officer at Harwell.

Burgess disappeared in June 1951. Guy Liddell retired from the Security Service in 1953, when he reached the retiring age of sixty. He was awarded the CB and was either then or soon after appointed to be Security Adviser to the Atomic Energy Authority in London. It is inconceivable that he would have been appointed to such a delicate post if he had ended his career under some cloud.

After so many years it is possible that confusion may have arisen over the circumstances of the appointment in 1946 of Sir Percy Sillitoe to be Director General of MI5. There was speculation that

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Liddell might be appointed. But the Prime Minister Mr Attlee decided that in the circumstances of that time, someone should be chosen from outside the service. This implied no reflection upon Guy Liddell who continued to be Deputy Director General until he retired in 1953.

WALTER BELL

London

BECAUSE of the nature of Guy Liddell's work, accounts of it in reference books are scanty. I wrote about his friendship with Burgess on what I still believe to be good authority. But I am quite willing to suffer correction by Walter Bell as regards the date of Liddell's retirement from MI5. I do not think that what I wrote can be taken to imply that Liddell was in any way party to Burgess' scandalous or treasonable activities; nor was it intended to do so.

Nevertheless, one cannot wholly exonerate those in high places who countenanced Burgess, despite his defiance of all normal codes of behaviour, because he could also be an amusing companion. This point, which I also tried to make in connexion with Hector McNeil, seems to have been missed by Lord Houghton (ENCOUNTER, June). It is all very well to say that McNeil finally got rid of Burgess as his Private Secretary. But McNeil should never have appointed him in the first place, nor should he have used his position as Minister of State to insist that Burgess be made an established member of Branch B of the Foreign Service.

ROBERT CECIL

University of Reading

A Prosecutor on "Nuremberg Reconsidered"

By Robert M. W. Kempner

MAY I ADD a few remarks to the excellent article of Donald C. Watt, "Nuremberg Reconsidered" [ENCOUNTER, May]? I am still in the stage of *considering* Nuremberg, not from hearsay or files but from my own observation and experience during my four years as a member of Justice Robert H. Jackson's staff and US Deputy Chief of Counsel during the subsequent proceedings.

1. The Nuremberg trials were fair and necessary, and in this point especially I agree with Bradley Smith and Werner Maser.

The outcries and complaints of critics about the alleged meaninglessness of punishing statesmen for initiating aggressive wars (an important count of the Nuremberg trials) are senseless. Critics argue that aggressive acts in recent years were not adjudicated and punished. Do they also think that robbers and thieves should not be punished because subsequent robbers and thieves may escape the law? Obviously the whole framework of civility, of law and order, would be dissipated by this argument.

2. The argument that the principle *nulla poena sine lege* was not observed in Nuremberg is equally fallacious. Aggressive wars were outlawed by common international law and by the Kellogg-Briand Pact; and, in addition, Anglo-Saxon law does not recognise the principle. So far as crimes against humanity are concerned, the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill!" is more than two thousand years old, and every defendant learned it in childhood.

3. Bradley Smith is right in his assertion that Nuremberg gave a new impetus to the development of international law, especially of statutory law. It is only necessary to mention the Genocide Convention, the European Human Rights Convention, the exemplary West German Constitution, and the various attempts to create an international Criminal Court. "Helsinki" is in this line of descent.

4. Today, nobody wants to be an "aggressor." Everybody abhors genocide. The loudest denigration is "War Criminal!" The news media are full of the semantic currency of Nuremberg.

5. Ever since Nuremberg there is almost worldwide an increasing exercise of the right to demonstration in the public interest. (Not without effect—witness Viet Nam.)

6. The opponents of Nuremberg are not of recent date. The political and personal friends of the Nuremberg war criminals started their anti-Nuremberg lobby immediately in 1945. Tens of thousands of German marks were contributed by the friends of mass murderers and spoliators. They sought the alignment of Joe McCarthy and the McCarthyites. Today their vicious propaganda aims at bagatellising and even denying the Holocaust.

7. The myth that the defence was at a "disadvantage" in Nuremberg is easily dispelled. The defendants knew well the documents they had written and signed, their unwitting preparation of the later trial briefs against them. The defence counsellors knew well the structures and political situation during the Nazi Reich. Even the odious new Nazi language was known to them. In contrast, the foreign Prosecutors had to work their way into the unknown German-language material from scratch. Only a minimal part of the Western and Russian prosecutors had even an acquaintance with the German language.

8. A trial of victors against the vanquished? No difference in this point from any domestic trial—from any trial at all. It is always a victorious social segment that brings the defeated criminal to trial. And we discover in many trials that defendants from higher social strata can more easily gain the favour of the Court than their criminal brothers from the lower social strata, like the Streichers, Sauckels, and Kaltenbrunners. (Bradley Smith is right in underlining

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this point. Alas, justice is seldom perfect!)[1]

9. Bradley Smith gives us a vivid picture of the discussions of the judges in chambers. But he forgets to project the long dreary hours and days, weeks and months, spent patiently in the Courtroom listening to witnesses, reading documents, inspecting exhibits. . . . It was indeed a monumental labour conducted by the Four-Power judges of the International Military Tribunal.

10. Was Nuremberg without any shortcomings? I think it should have included crimes against humanity committed before 1939 by German Nazis against German citizens. This would have lightened the burden of the new German Federal Republic. As Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer once told me, "We are glad that the Allies have done part of this work for us! . . ."

ROBERT M. W. KEMPNER
(formerly US Deputy Chief of Counsel at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials)
Frankfurt-am-Main
and Landsdowne, Pennsylvania

[1] In 13 trials in Nuremberg 199 defendants were indicted; 38 were acquitted, 22 were executed, and the rest given prison sentences—most of these pardoned before 1955. Hermann Goering committed suicide, Martin Bormann was tried in absentia.

Oswald & Murder

IN THE April ENCOUNTER *R* has raised a most important point in reflecting on a recent biographical study of Lee Harvey Oswald, who is now established by overwhelming evidence to have been involved in firing at the Dallas motorcade. The assassin was shown to be a person motivated by a quasi-Marxist bitterness against Western society; and we have seen since in the sorry series of subsequent urban terrorists the criminal hatred and envy by which the insignificant, through murder, can eliminate and claim superiority over the successful.

But there could be more in this case, which virtually ushered in the era of urban guerrilla warfare beneath the paralysis created by the East–West nuclear balance (which Khrushchev failed to overturn by his Cuban "adventurism"): the possibility of organisation, and direction, even from abroad. In diverse ways, Edward Jay Epstein in *Legend* and Michael Eddowes in *The Oswald File* have documented in impressive detail the evidence now indicating that the murder of the American President was not conceived in the mind of an unbalanced lunatic, or by the CIA, or by the Mafia, or by the Texan oil-barons, but by the KGB in Moscow. And, fifteen years later and wiser, who can say it could not have been *them*? You?

ERIC PETERLADE
Wallway, Holt
Norfolk

UNLIKE Mr Peterlade, I do not find the evidence produced in *Legend* or *The Oswald File* impressive. In a court of law, I think, it would be dismissed as purely speculative. But it is certainly not for me to say that Oswald could not have been manipulated by *them*, that is, the KGB. All I would say is that I see very little reason for thinking so, and very good reason for thinking the opposite. *R*

Of "Fire & Ice"

POOR OLD M. J. L! Is he really "trapped" in London theatres? Maybe he has been watching the wrong "school of new English playwrights." It's hard to be sure, as he doesn't actually identify the school, other than naming Bond, Mercer, Hampton, Griffiths ["In the Margin," May].

But cheer up, M. J. L. Social comment can be fun! Ever heard, for example, of Alan Ayckbourn? If you really can't stand the London theatre, why not try the (in my opinion) superior fare of, say, the Victoria Theatre, Stoke, where the work of several "new English playwrights" has been very entertainingly performed.

If you're as tired of theatre as you sound, perhaps you'd be better employed curled up with a good book. Maybe then you'd have spotted that the garbled "fire and ice" quotation was actually a poem of that name by Robert Frost—another writer of "intellectual illiteracy and ideological simple-mindedness"?

More in sorrow than in anger,

LYNDA BURKE
Morecambe

I AM GLAD that my case seems to have aroused in Miss Burke pity, sorrow, and hope, good traditional theatrical emotions. If they are also to be found in the theatre she recommends in Stoke, I shall try to make my way there. As for curling up with a good book, I did once with that edition of Robert Frost's poems; and, accordingly, referred in my Marginal Note to the fact of the character's (or the playwright's) "cribbing."

The concluding rhetorical question prompts to repeat what I have often written in these pages and elsewhere, namely, that the metaphorics of violence and catastrophe, whether in the hands of ingenious poets (from Milton to Frost) or insipid cliché-mongers (from St. Just to Sartre), always need to be looked at very closely and coolly. They are almost always (I can think at the moment of no exception) intellectually illiterate, in the sense that no clear ideas or precepts emerge from them, and are indeed ideologically simple-minded, for they make in terms of political action mere noises and verbal gestures and do not really intend to destroy the whole real world in floods and fires, storms and earthquakes, icy glaciers and red-hot blood-baths. So it is that we may, as readers, be moved by the powerful imagery, and as citizens be alarmed by the dangerous sloganeering.

M. J. L.

Peace in the Middle East

ELIE KEDOURIE's mixture of perceptiveness, common sense and erudition makes it a pleasure to read his article on the Middle East in the May number of ENCOUNTER. However, one or two points he has omitted to make, presumably for lack of space,

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should, I think, be made for him if only to enhance the fairness of his judgement and render his account more complete.

Thus, in discussing Britain's inter-war Palestinian policy, Professor Kedourie would have made the Foreign Office dilemma clearer to his readers had he mentioned *both* pledges made in the Balfour Declaration—both sides of the equation, as it were. He mentions the pledge made to the Jews, but omits the one made to the Palestinian Arabs. Yet that pledge constituted the basic condition on which the Jews were to be helped to establish a national home in Palestine. British support for a Jewish national home in that country, said the Declaration, would be forthcoming, "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." It was failure to implement this basic condition that resulted in the "serious disturbances" by the Palestinians mentioned by Professor Kedourie. Bearing this condition in mind, his statement that the British were led "to reconsider their commitment . . . to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine" is, perhaps, less than fair to the British. The commitment was conditional. No "reconsideration" was, therefore, necessary—merely a decision to implement the Balfour Declaration more in accordance with its wording than heretofore i.e. with greater regard for *both* sides of the equation and, therefore, with greater regard for Arab Palestinian grievances.

This was particularly urgent since, as British spokesmen frequently pointed out—and as Professor Kedourie would, of course, have done if space had allowed—the promise to the Jews spoke of a "*home in* Palestine" (my italics) and not of a Jewish "State of Palestine", while events seemed to be pointing to the rise of just such a State.

Professor Kedourie appears to me to imply that the British failed to foresee such a development. This must again be due to lack of space, for otherwise he would surely have quoted e.g. Curzon, Ormsby-Gore, Hogarth and others to show that the British were quite well aware of it from the earliest days of the Balfour Declaration. This, indeed, was the reason for the existence of the dilemma: the real consequence of

On Political Decomposition . . .

THE DECOMPOSITION *of societies is a real phenomenon, observable yesterday in Argentine, today in Turkey. When Enrico Berlinguer invented the "historic compromise" in 1973 it was in order to spare his country a Chilean-style decomposition, whereby the failure of a Leftist experiment ends in a Rightist* coup d'état.

Certainly the Italian-style decomposition involves no danger of any putsch. The neo-fascists are very few in number, although active on the fringes of terrorism, not very distinguishable from the violent groupuscules of the extreme left, who are equally unrepresentative and even more aggressive. But contrary to general belief in a period when the notion of "power" is bandied about in a vague and slovenly manner, it does not require the installation of a dictatorship in order for the individual to be oppressed: all that is needed is the disappearance of democracy. As soon as the legitimate authority loses its grip on society it is replaced by a legion of *de facto* powers ranging from the Mafia to Neighbourhood Committees and constituting a sort of patchwork dictatorship, a despotism disseminated throughout the body social.

Italy is cram-full of powers of this kind. Take the "young proletarian committees" which occupied Milan University, halted teaching activities, and vandalised the premises, books, and scientific equipment. The laissez-faire *"authorities" left well enough alone. Those teachers and students who disagreed just had to shut up or get out. For fear of a pitched battle the Rector took care not to call the police. Why should policemen make any effort to see laws respected when justice is no longer prepared to apply them? Last year, when some members of the Red Brigades were to appear before the Italian courts, their outside accomplices made so many murder threats to the magistrates and the jury that the jurors took fright, withdrew or disappeared; and the trials did not take place.*

Or take the "Committee" which "democratically" barred the appointment of Luigi Barzini as editor of the daily paper *Il Messaggero*. Barzini, author of *The Italians*, a veteran anti-fascist and sometime inmate of Mussolini's jails, and former Liberal MP, was turned down for the editorship of the paper as an "agent of the capitalist class" by an "editorial staff committee" which visibly has stronger backing from the political outside than it had on the journalistic inside. Worse still, the Liberal Party did not dare to denounce this assault upon one of its own members.

THESE FEW EXAMPLES *show how the great and small* de facto *powers now swarming over the corpse of the democratic State are creating piecemeal that same climate of fear and timid conformism which a centralised authoritarian State creates wholesale. What we have here, in fact, is an original formula for decentralised dictatorship.*

Obviously this situation has its economic aspect. As the historian Professor Rosario Romeo remarked, for the last ten years Italy had been in a

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British policy (a Jewish State) was seen to be diverging from its avowed intention (a Jewish home).

Lack of space has also prevented Professor Kedourie, in mentioning Arab pro-Axis sympathies, from drawing attention to their Zionist equivalent: e.g. the enthusiasm of Jabotinsky (now one of Israel's national heroes) for Mussolini and his régime, or the offer by the Irgun (one of whose leaders was Shamir, now President of the Knesset) to the German government during the War "to take an active part on Germany's side" and help to "maintain and strengthen the future German position of power in the Near East", provided the Nazi government continued its support of the Zionist movement and helped it to create a Zionist State of Eretz Israel. (Quotation from the report of the German Naval Attaché in Ankara.) The offer, however, came to nothing. In 1941 a representative of the "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel" was sent by that organisation to make contact with the German government and propose joint action against British forces in Palestine. He was captured by the British before he could fulfil his mission. It is only fair to add that though Mr Begin, now Prime Minister of Israel, joined the Irgun on his arrival in Palestine and eventually became head of it, he arrived too late to be in any way responsible for the offer to Germany.

KYRIL FITZLYON

London

I AM VERY GRATEFUL to Kyril FitzLyon for his kind words about my article in the May ENCOUNTER. He is however mistaken in thinking that the points which he discusses in his letter were omitted from my article for lack of space. If I did not deal with them, it was because my purpose was not to rehearse yet once more the rights and wrongs of the Balfour Declaration or the exact manner in which it was to be interpreted. Neither was it my purpose to discuss for their own sake the approaches to Germany and Italy made by Arab figures before and during the Second World War or similar approaches made by Zionist figures—not that these contacts were anything as important as those maintained with the Axis by Arabs.

My purpose was to examine what considerations

. . . By Jean-François Revel

state of what might be called permanent general strike. This chronic strike has had the result of throwing a majority of businesses into no less chronic bankruptcy, and therefore of rebounding against the workers. Yet all of them expect a State they no longer obey to provide for a living wage and welfare benefits, and since these do not come out of production they can only come from foreign loans, which means basically the United States and Western Germany. The dependence in this case is just as glaring in the field of finance as in that of defence. It is not created by words (to be expunged by polite silence, or revived by a tough American statement); it is a fact. It can be remedied, but not denied. To quote only one prosaic statistic, Italy imports meat at a cost of 2 million dollars a day.

During the Portuguese decomposition of 1975, several sympathisers explained and excused that country's diffused dictatorship and economic deterioration by putting the blame on the long reactionary period under the previous authoritarian régime. This was partly justified, but not only has the implied "law" been unverified in Spain, it turns out to look altogether ridiculous when applied to Italy. Christian Democracy may deserve harsh criticism, but two things can undoubtedly be said in its favour—the Italian Republic has been one of the most liberal and pluralist régimes in Europe (certainly more so than the Gaullist Republic), especially following 1958–60, under "opening-to-the-Left" majorities. And for those ten years or so Italy saw its greatest surge of economic expansion since the Renaissance. Its subsequent disintegration cannot, therefore, be simple-mindedly ascribed to "a reaction against political oppression and economic underdevelopment."

A FAR BETTER EXPLANATION **of the Italian collapse is to be found in the decadence and impotence of a party in power which has lost its majority but is all the more disinclined to reform because it cannot be replaced without the entire system falling apart. In fact, in all those countries where alternative means a change not only of Majority but of Society, the gravity of the collective decision is not diminished by the fact that it is brought about by the ballot rather than the bullet.**

On the brink of such a crucial step, the problem of the integration into democracy of a non-democratic party is insoluble. Whereupon society often seizes up in a kind of stationary agitation which convulses but does not transform it.

What makes the dilemma all the more inevitable in Italy is that the Communist Party keeps turning out contradictory professions of faith, one day declaring for the Atlantic Pact, the next day for the Soviet Union; one day for pluralism, the next for Leninism: one day for Euro-Communism, the next against; one day for foreign investment, the next against multinationals; one day against the extension of the public sector, that same day against private capitalism. On top of that, while it claims to support "national roads to socialism" it keeps sending envoys to Moscow for consultation and suggestions. (In early January the visit of a delegation headed by a member of the CPI secretariat, Gianni Cervetti, was followed by the simultaneous appearance in Pravda, Izvestia *and* L'Unità *of articles demanding the resignation of the Andreotti cabinet.)*

When so many contradictions prevail in both government and opposition, decomposition is imminent. *J.-F. R.*

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weighed with British policy makers and with those who advised them both in 1936–9 and during the early years of the War. As the documents make clear, in the earlier case, the question was whether to introduce or not to introduce Arab states into the Palestine problem. Mr FitzLyon will appreciate that this question has nothing to do with the tenor or the interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. Indeed, as I said in my article, it was quite open to the British government to re-interpret the Balfour Declaration in a sense favourable to the Palestine Arabs without bringing in the Arab states. In the case of contacts with Germany and Italy, the fear which operated on British policy makers had to do with Arab, and not with Zionist, contacts. Zionists would have found it very difficult, not to say impossible, to make a deal with the Axis and policy makers would have been more foolish than they actually were to put the same weight on Zionist as on Arab contacts.

ELIE KEDOURIE

London

Thank you, Mr Hudson

WHAT a civilised people the British are! Whenever I am horrible about somebody I get invited out to lunch.

JAN MORRIS

Llanystumdwy, Gwynedd
Wales

Eduard Bernstein

MAY I EXPRESS my admiration for Robert S. Wistrich's account (ENCOUNTER, June) of what he correctly calls *Wiedergutmachung* towards Eduard Bernstein? One should, really, not talk of a "Renaissance" because that term presupposes an earlier flowering; this was not the case of Bernstein's revisionist opus. Wistrich's analysis in ENCOUNTER surpasses all German articles on the subject that have come to my attention.

I should also like to call attention to the impending appearance of another significant study in the field. It is a German translation of Bertrand Russell's *German Social Democracy* (n.e. 1965), to edited and introduced by Achim von Borries for the Dietz publishers in Bonn. Russell's work was the British counterpart of Bernstein's confrontation with Fabian socialism.

HELMUT HIRSCH

Düsseldorf

AUTHORS

Vilas Sarang was educated in Bombay and at Indiana University and currently teaches English at the University of Basra in Iraq. His stories have appeared in *The Malahat Review*, *Mundras Artium*, *Tri Quarterly* and the Penguin anthology *New Writing in India*. *A Kind of Silence*, a collection of poems, was published this year by Writers' Workshop in Calcutta. "Musk Deer" was translated from the Marathi by the author.

L. P. Wilkinson's article in this issue is the third in a series of four based on the Lord Northcliffe Lectures given at University College, London.

Robert Conquest's article is based on a paper lately presented at a colloquium of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C.

Max Black is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Humane Letters at Cornell University and a Senior Member of the Cornell Program on Science, Technology and Society. His books include *Caveats and Critiques* (1975), *Margins of Precision* (1970), *The Labyrinth of Language* (1968) and *A Companion to Wittgenstein's Tractatus* (1964). He will be giving the 1978 Tarner Lectures at Cambridge University. His article in this issue was an address to the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Roger Sandall is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Between 1965 and 1973 he made more than a dozen documentary films for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. After being shown at the Venice Festival in five successive years (1968–1972) these became quite well known abroad, and special screenings were held at the National Film Theatre in London and at the Paris Cinémathèque.

Freda Downie's volume of poems, *A Stranger Here*, was published by Secker & Warburg in 1977.

Oliver Todd writes regularly for *L'Express* (in Paris), where his article in this issue originally appeared and of which he is an editor. He is also the author of several books, including *The Year of the Crab* (the English translation was published in 1975 by Aidan Ellis) and a biography of Giscard d'Estaing, *La Marelle de Giscard* (Laffont, 1977).

Peter Porter's latest book of poems is *The Cost of Seriousness*, published by Oxford University Press.

John Hargreaves has been Professor of History at the University of Aberdeen since 1962. He is the author of *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (1967), *France and West Africa* (1969) and *West Africa Partitioned* (Vol. I, 1976), all published by Macmillan, and is joint editor of *Oxford Studies in African Affairs*.

Fleur Adcock has published three books of poems, *Tigers* (1967), *High Tide in the Garden* (1971) and *The Scenic Route* (1974), all from Oxford University Press.

WE REGRET that the replies to George F. Kennan's "A Last Warning" (ENCOUNTER, July) have been unavoidably held over until next month when the discussion will be concluded by Richard Pipes and Leopold Labedz.

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Life and Letters Today

London

REVISIONS REVISED: A revised version of the Lord's Prayer to be published this week reinstates the familiar word "temptation".

Liturgical experts in recent years substituted the words "do not bring us to the time of trial" for "lead us not into temptation" but this provoked protests. The revised wording is "Let us not be led into temptation."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Auckland

PARENT POWER: *A general synod of the Anglican Church of New Zealand is to consider whether to amend the Prayer Book to remove sexist language. The Very Rev Edward Johnston, Dean of Waikato, said the assumption throughout the liturgy that God is masculine might adversely affect women's attitudes to their lives and personal relationships with God. "It is shocking, once you become sensitive to it."*

Mr Johnston wants a set of guidelines indicating how present services could be modified. The end result of his proposals might be that the "Our Father" would become the "Our Parent" and the Creed would begin: "I believe in God, the parent Almighty."

EVENING STANDARD

London

LITERARY LOOT: Britain's librarians are not too surprised by the 13,500 stolen library books and records discovered in a Sussex flat last week. They expect theft as a matter of routine and have even gone so far as to survey the most popular choices of the looters.

Perennial favourites nation-wide are expensive books that are difficult to obtain—especially car workshop manuals, holiday guides and "coffee table" books. Clearly heading the list, however, is the regular best-seller, The Guinness Book of Records.

Some librarians can even predict future trends. A Wiltshire librarian links thefts with films, television series and deaths of stars. "First there was Jaws, Bruce Lee and Elvis Presley" she said last week, "and now it will be Jackie ('The Stud') Collins and books on skateboarding."

Large-scale thieves tend to be somewhat obsessive in their interests. Recent cases include: a West Country lad who stole 600 science fiction novels ("He was a science fiction fan,"); a looter who took the entire 17 volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, book by book; and a Salford organist who disembowelled almost every book on music in his local library, re-arranged the pages and placed his own name on the cover.

SUNDAY TIMES

Philadelphia

PROTO-FASCISM: *John Simon in "The Language" has ferreted out a redundancy ("three-part trilogy") —which ought to have been caught—in my book "Voices from the Japanese Cinema" [Professor Joan Mellen writes]. Based on this he concludes that I am not fit to be a professor of literature at Temple University.*

While I occasionally enjoy his criticism, if not his venom, Mr. Simon's propensity for literary detective work too often amounts to unseemly pettiness passing as profundity. I, of course, am not alone in being singled out for gratuitous personal attack by Mr. Simon. His compulsion to assail—without provocation and in the most personal terms—people he does not know is designed to hurt them deeply and bespeaks a sensibility that is essentially protofascist.

ESQUIRE

New York City

RHYMES & RICHES: The master himself, Irving Berlin, now 90, still keeps an ear open for the tunes that are being written.

"I liked that number 'Little Green Apples'," he told me. "But I'll tell you something, it wasn't written by a professional song-writer. A professional song-writer would never have rhymed. 'And God didn't make little green apples' with 'it don't snow in Minneapolis'.

"You know what I would have said? I'd have written: 'God didn't make little green apples, and we don't pray in churches and chapels'." And doubtless made a fortune out of it.

THE TIMES

Ann Arbor

GERMAN WITH TEARS: *A former student at the University of Michigan is suing the university for over $500,000 because he alleges he suffered mental anguish after receiving a B grade instead of an A on his German course.*

THE GUARDIAN

Belfast

BLOOD: Mrs Betty Williams picked an unfortunate phrase yesterday in a radio interview explaining her decision to step down from the executive of the Northern Ireland Peace Movement. She was doing so, she said, "to bring forward fresh blood."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Paris

PURITY: *British Airways has been fined 80 francs ($17) by a Paris court for failing to print the conditions on its tickets in French as well as in English. The company also was ordered to pay 200 francs ($42) in damages to the French Language Users' General Association, which brought the prosecution under the Language Purity Law of* 1975.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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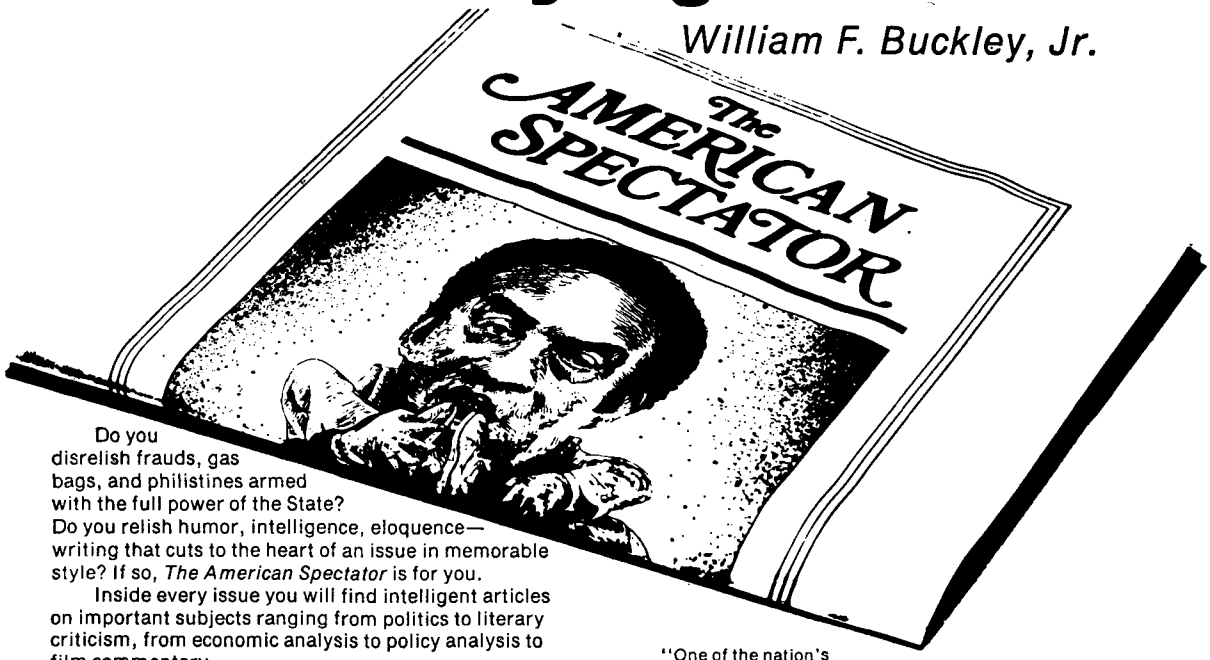
William F. Buckley, Jr.



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